BUMPER ISSUE NO. 55

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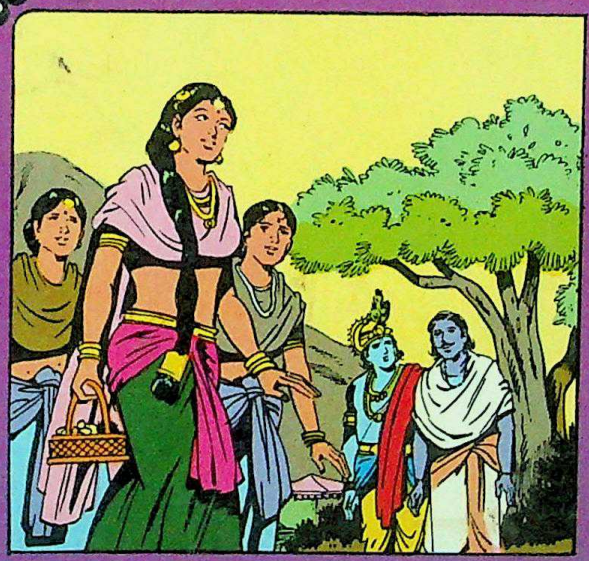
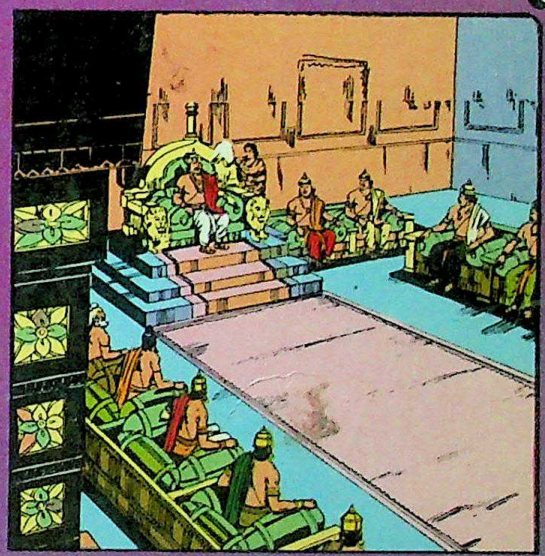
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

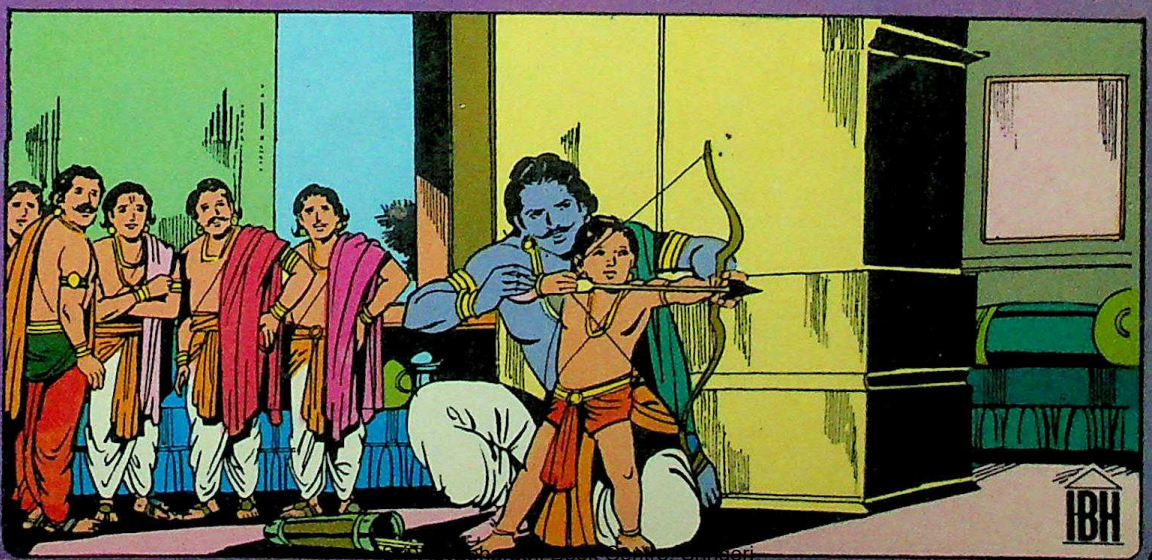
MAHABHARATA

THE REIGN AT INDRAPRASTHA

- THE PANDAVAS RECALLED TO HASTINAPURA
- A HALL FOR YUDHISHTHIRA
- ARJUNA'S 12-YEAR-LONG EXILE







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THE REIGN AT INDRAPRASTHA

Veda Vyasa's epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya, a great-grandson of Vyasa, and the many learned sages assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

The earlier volumes of our rendering of the Mahabharata discussed the childhood days of the Pandavas and the Kauravas and their growing rivalry. The Pandavas managed to foil the attempt of the Kauravas to burn them in a shellac palace. After their escape, they lived in disguise in the forest and later at Ekachakra. In due course, the five Pandava brothers were married to Draupadi.

The followed three volumes relate the events leading to the Pandavas being recalled to Hastinapura, Arjuna's 12-year exile, and his marriages in turn to Uloopi, Chitrangada and Subhadra. Also described is the acquisition of the celestial bow Gandeeva and in-exhaustible quivers by Arjuna, and the construction of a magnificent hall for Yudhishthira.

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Published by H.G. Mirchandani, for India Book House Pvt. Ltd.,
Mahalaxmi Chambers, 22, Bhulabhai Desai Road, Bombay-400 026,
and printed by him at Prasad Offset Press Shed B & C, S. No. 42 Hissa No. 2,
Sativali, Vasai Kaman Road, Vasai Taluka, Thane District.

Editor:
ANANT PAI

Script: KAMALA CHANDRAKANT • *Artworks:* DILIP KADAM

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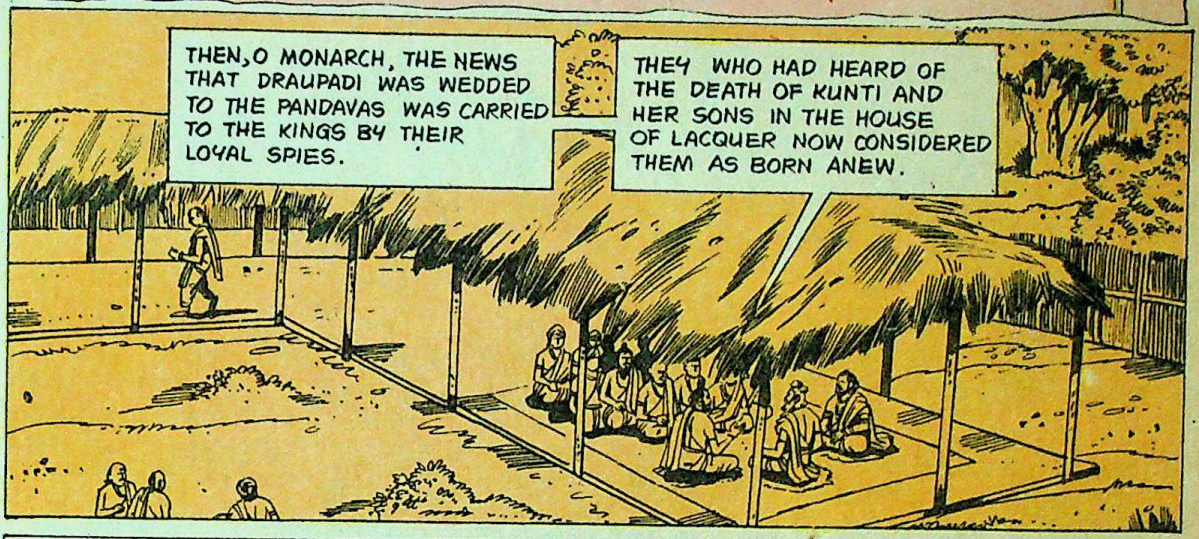
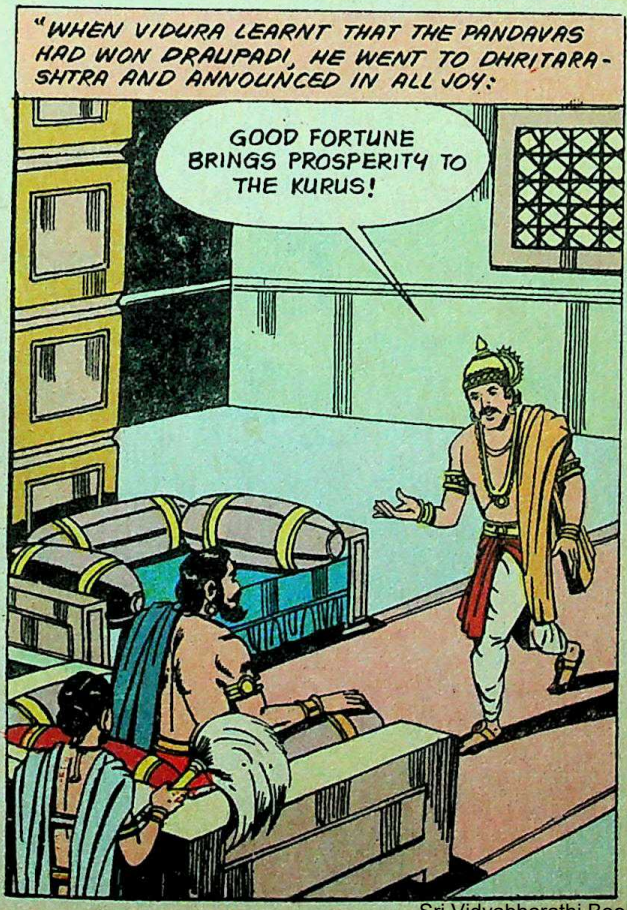
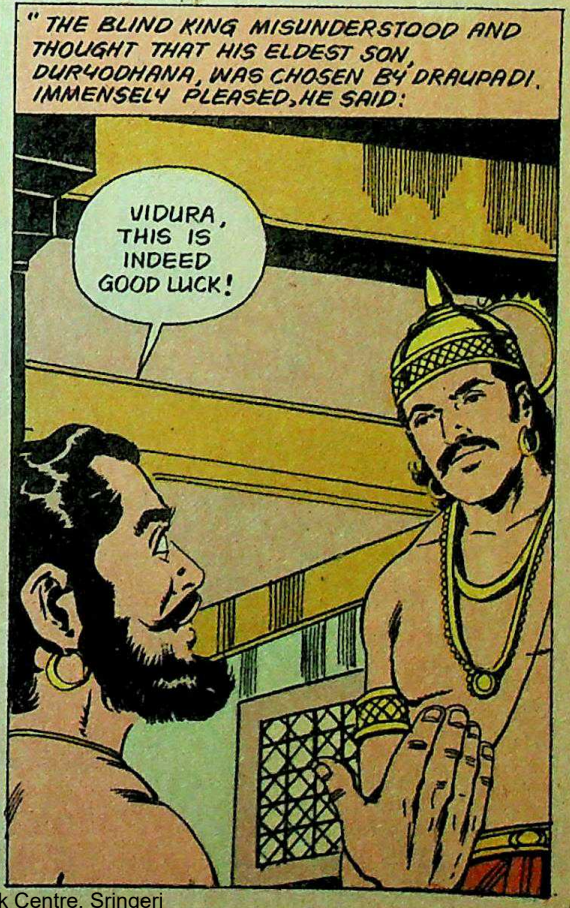
Mahabharata – 13

The Pandavas recalled to Hastinapura







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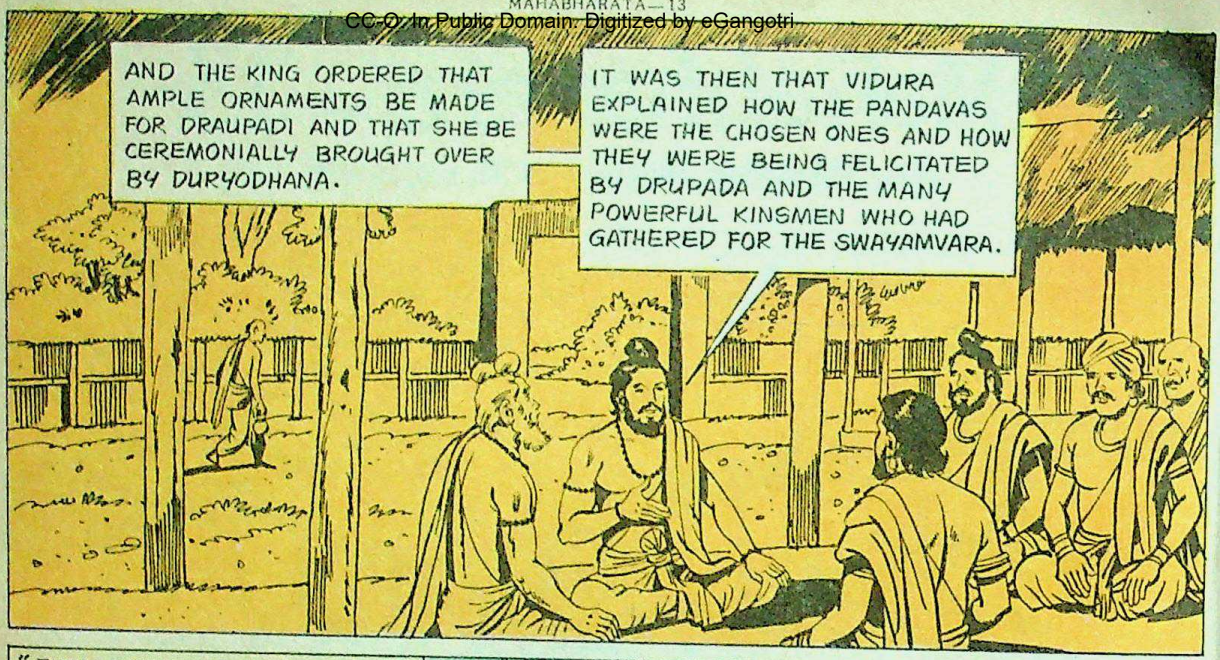

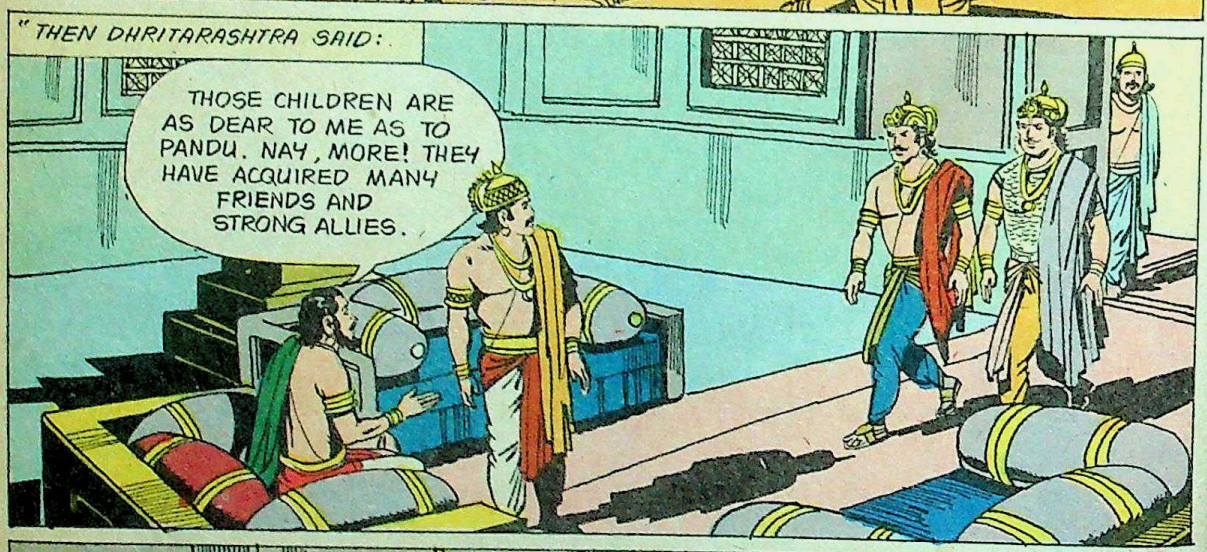

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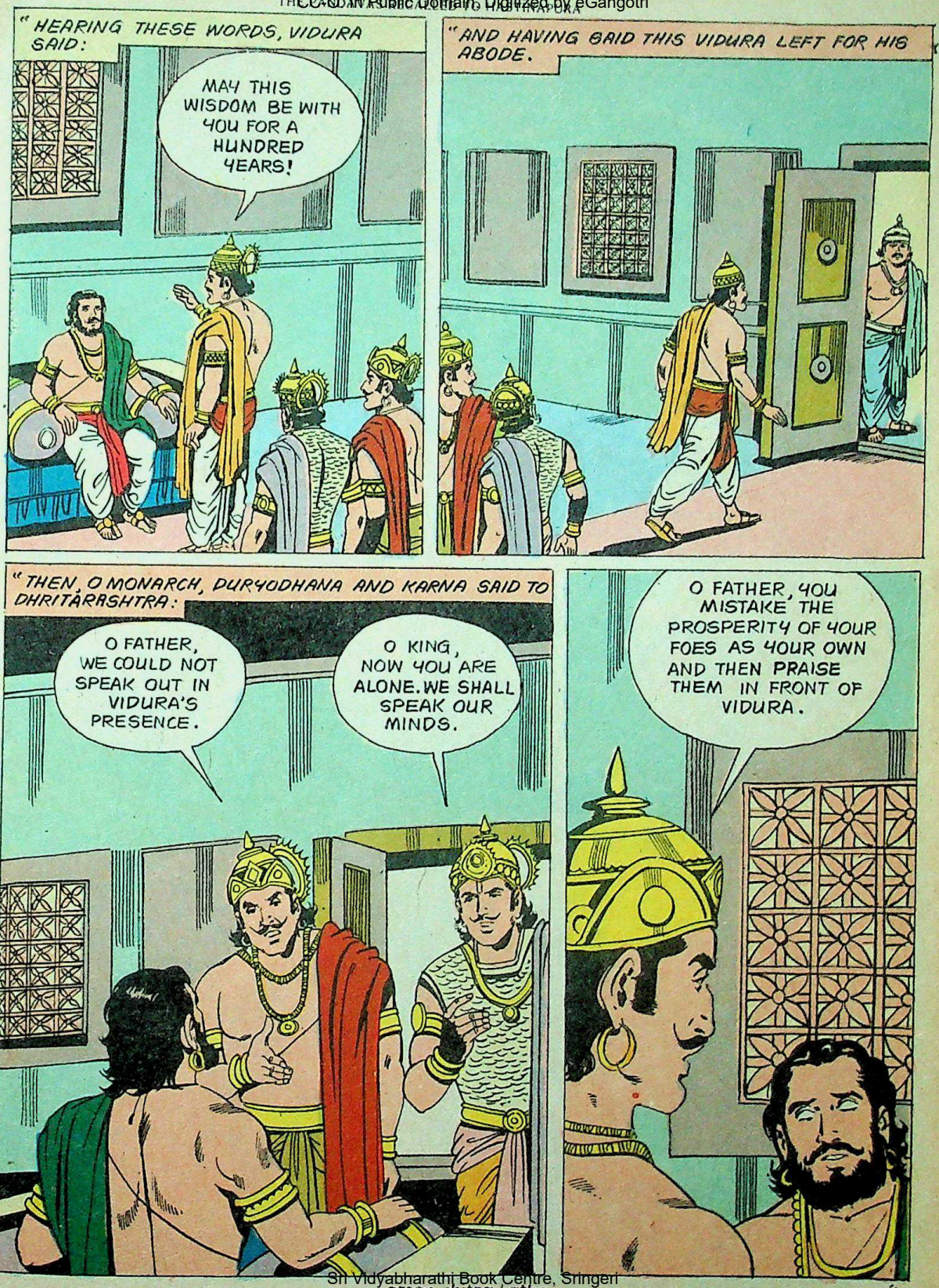

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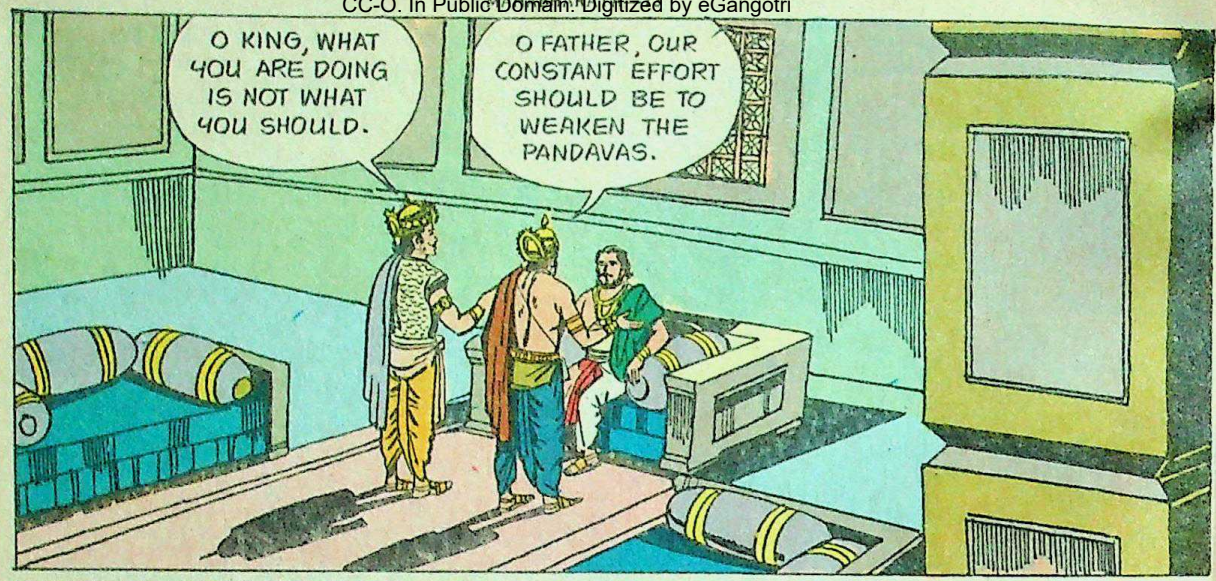

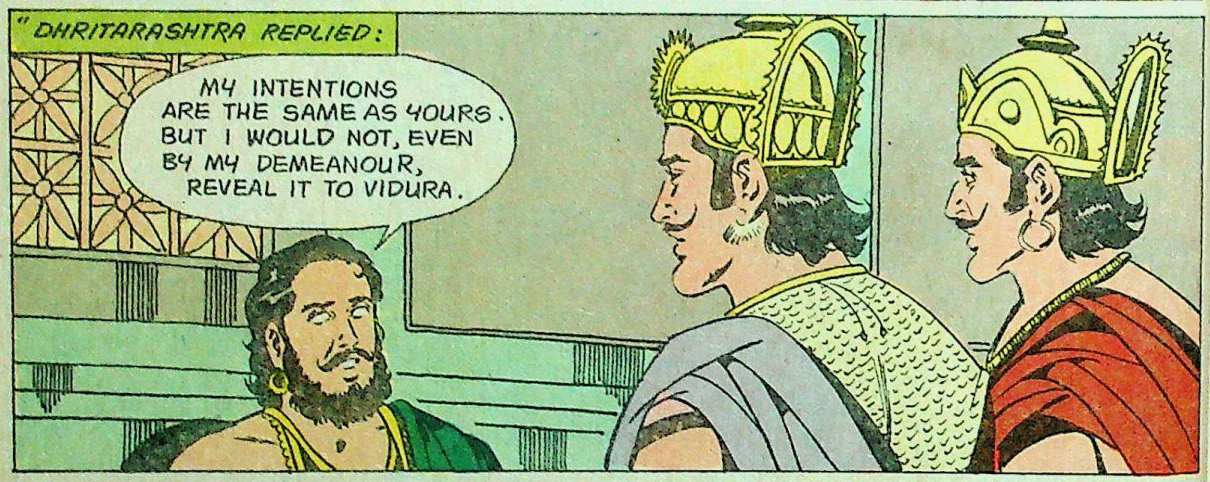

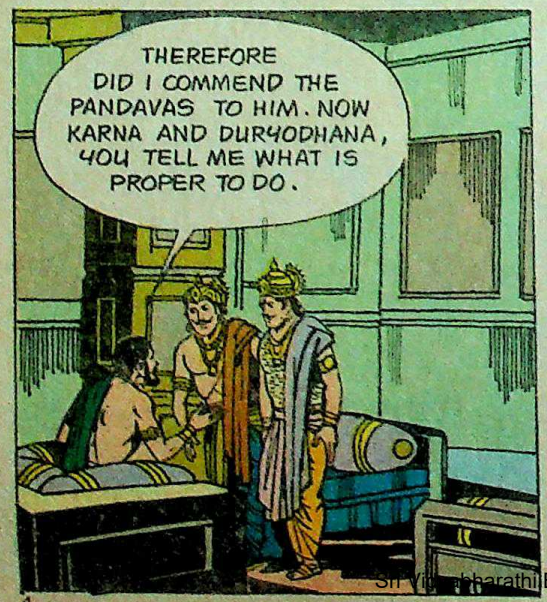

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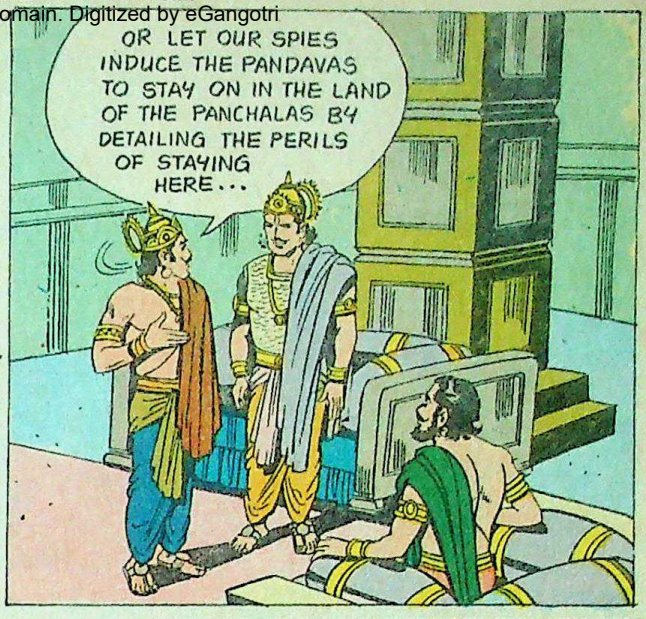

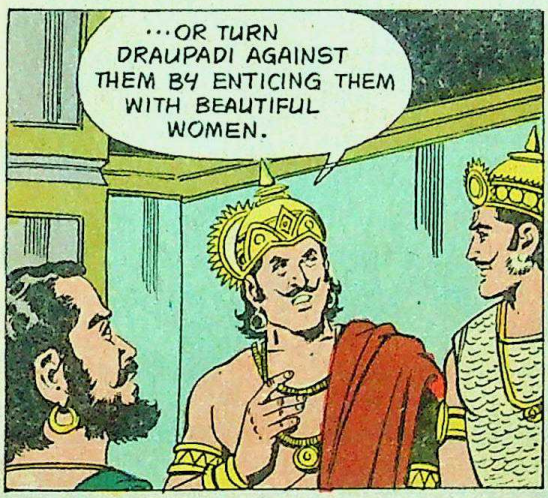

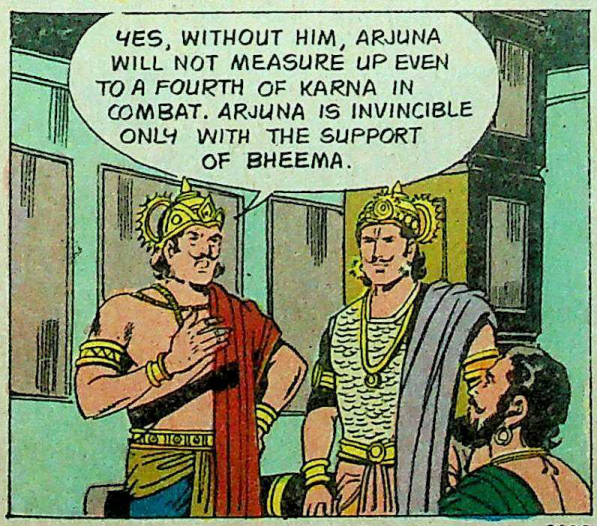

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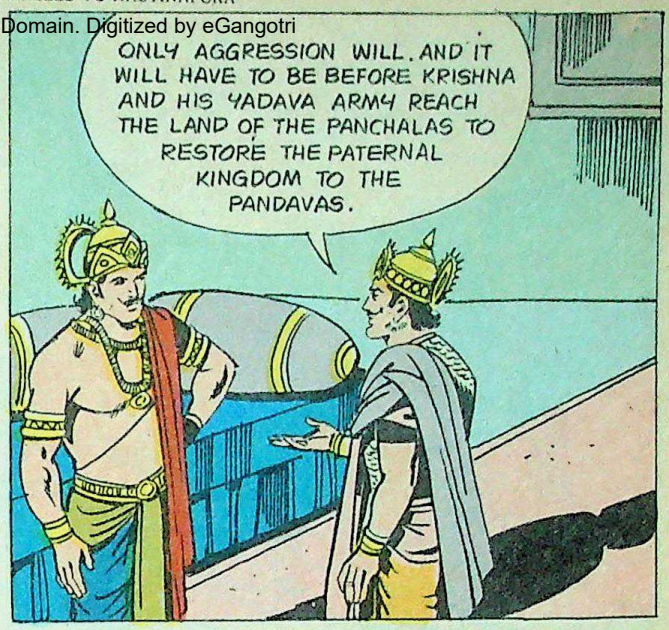

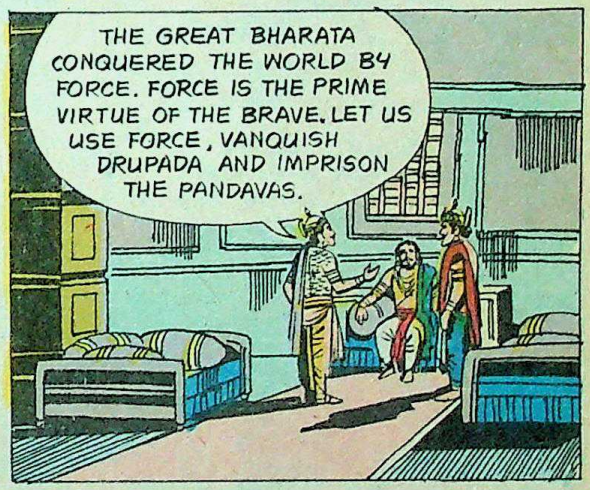

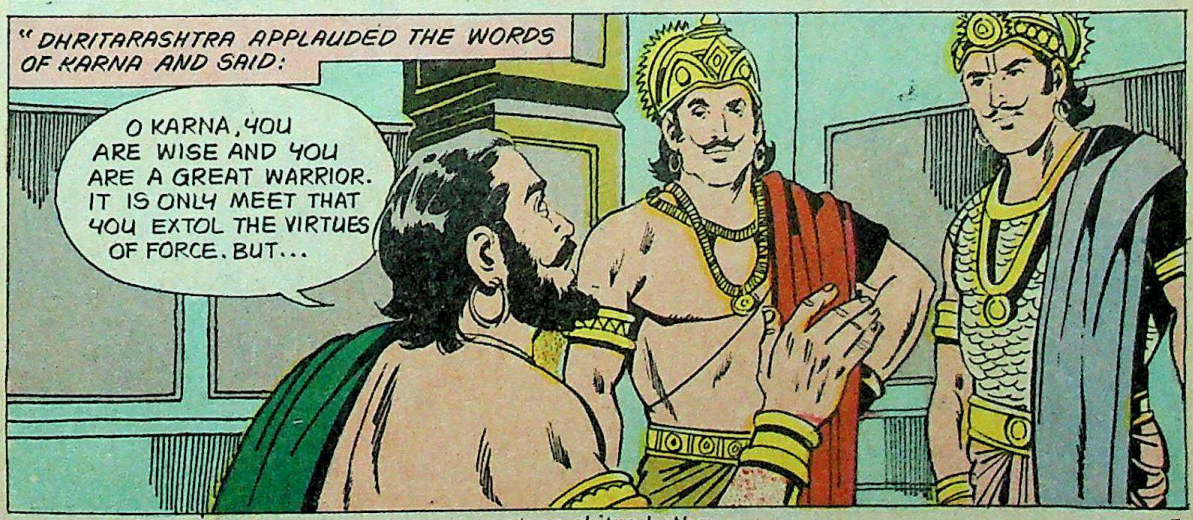

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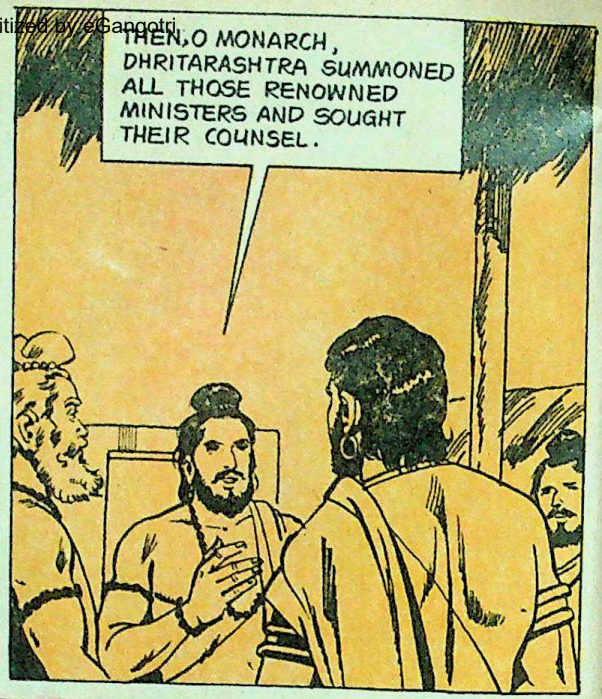

I DO NOT LIKE ANY COLLISION WITH THE PANDAVAS. PANDU WAS TO ME AS YOU ARE. SO ARE THE SONS OF KUNTI AND GANDHARI TO ME.

LET HALF THE KINGDOM BE GIVEN TO THEM. IT IS, INDEED, THE INHERITANCE OF THOSE NOBLE KURU SCIONS.

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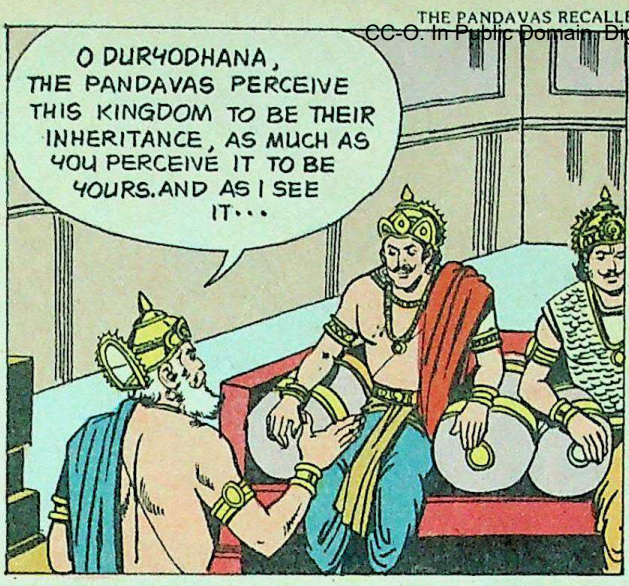

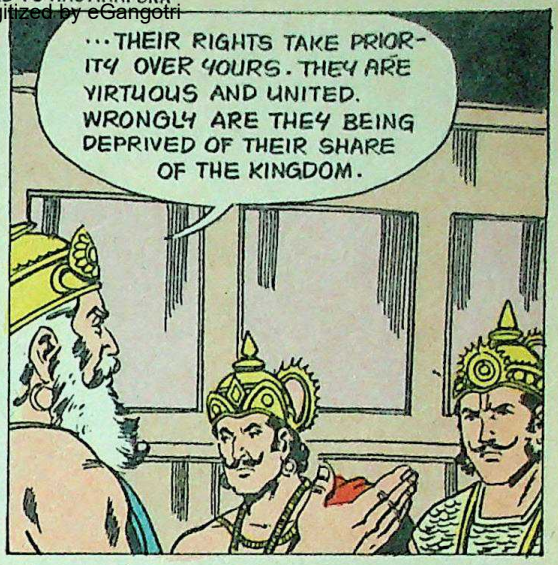

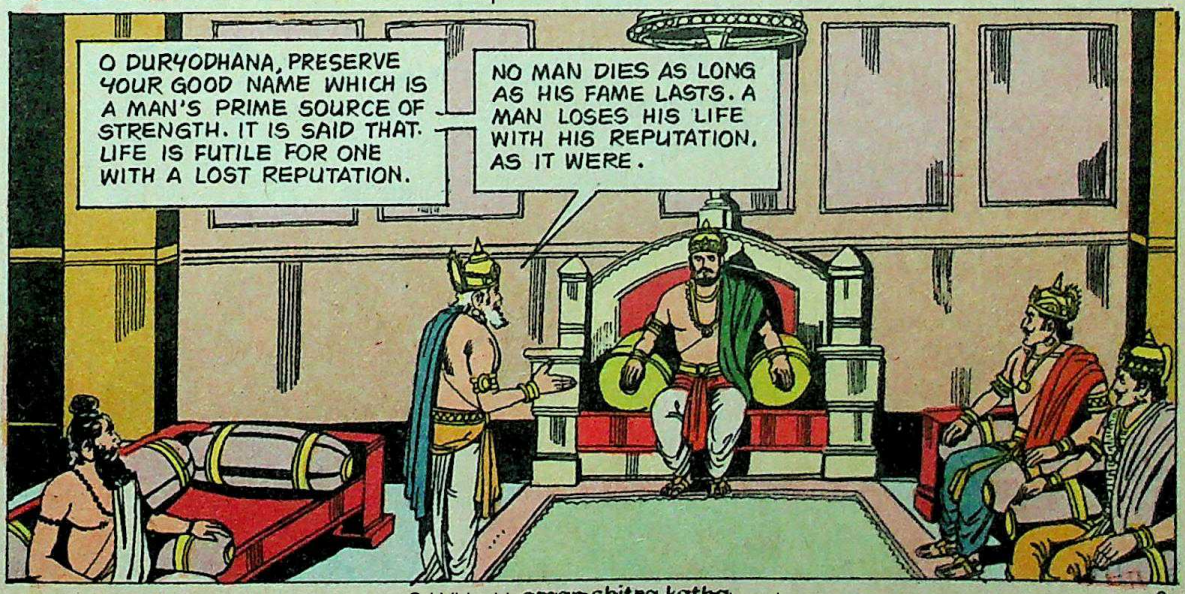

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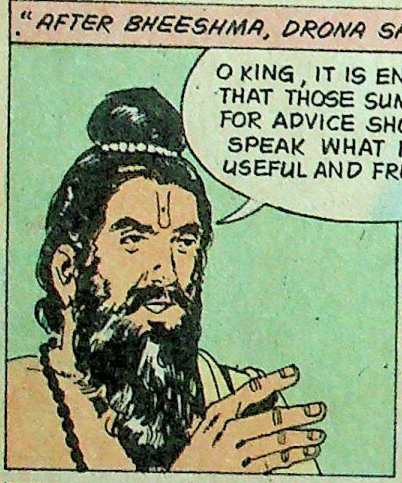

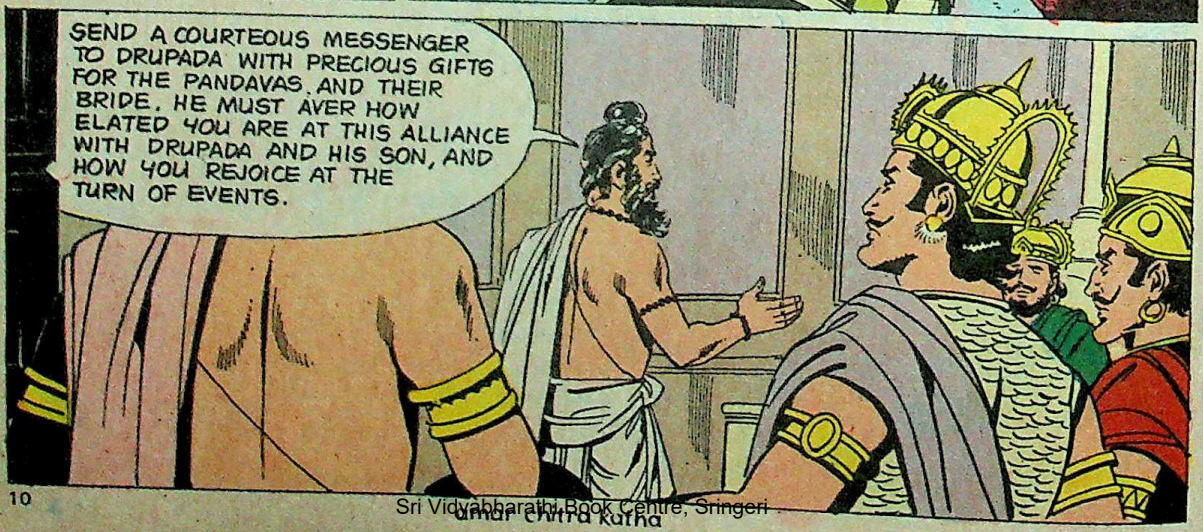

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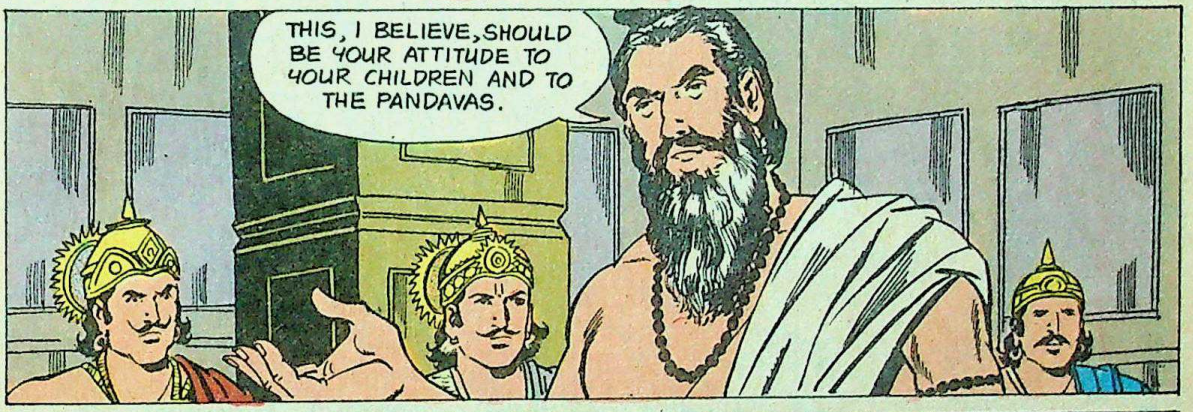

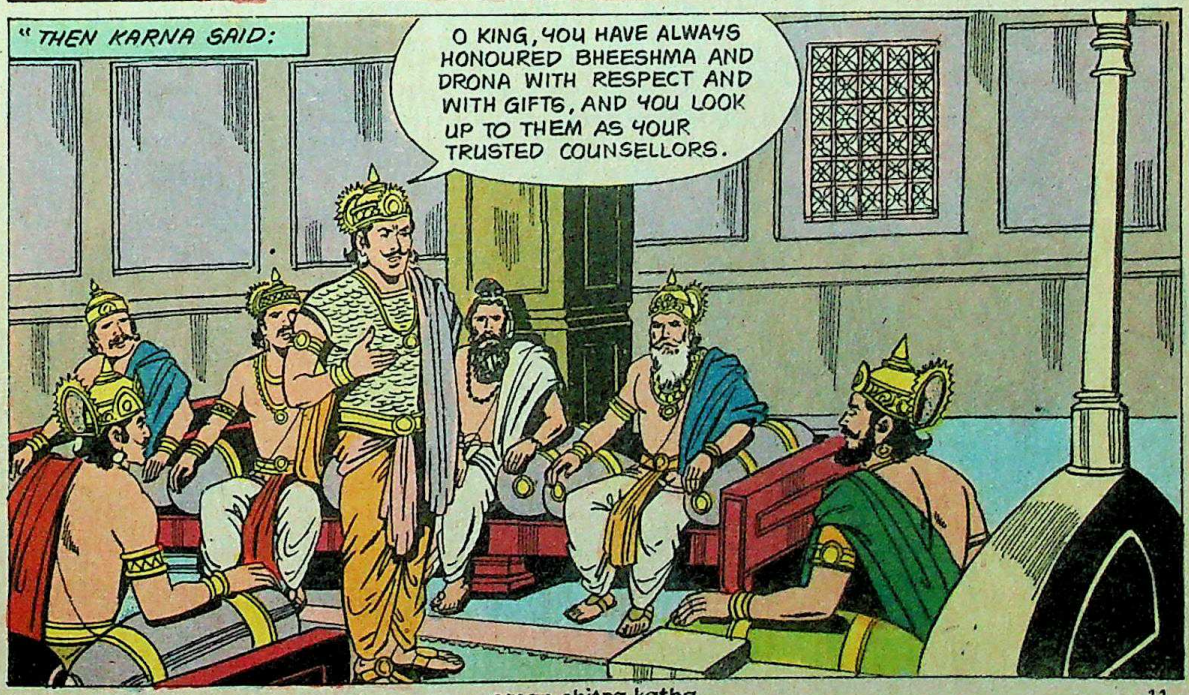

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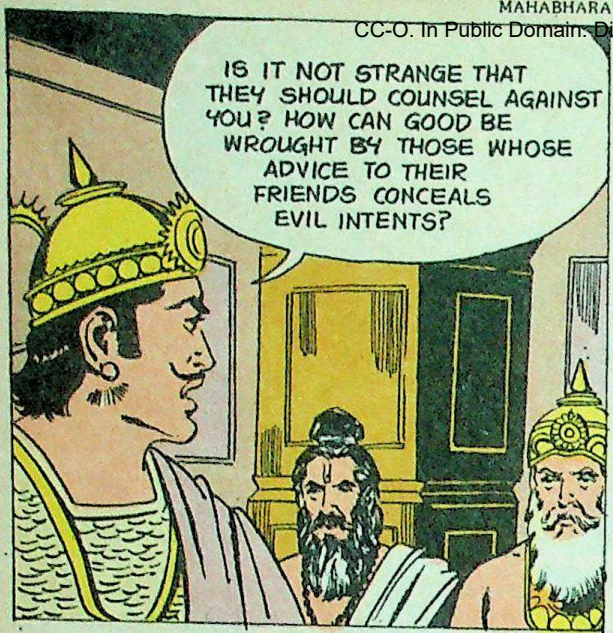

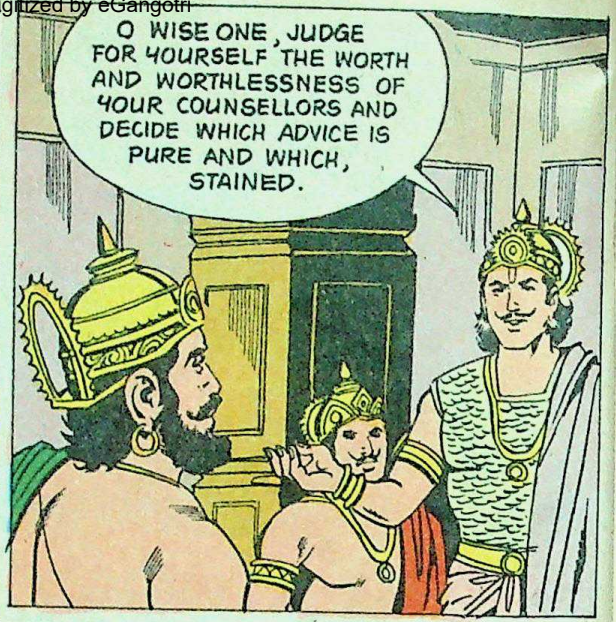

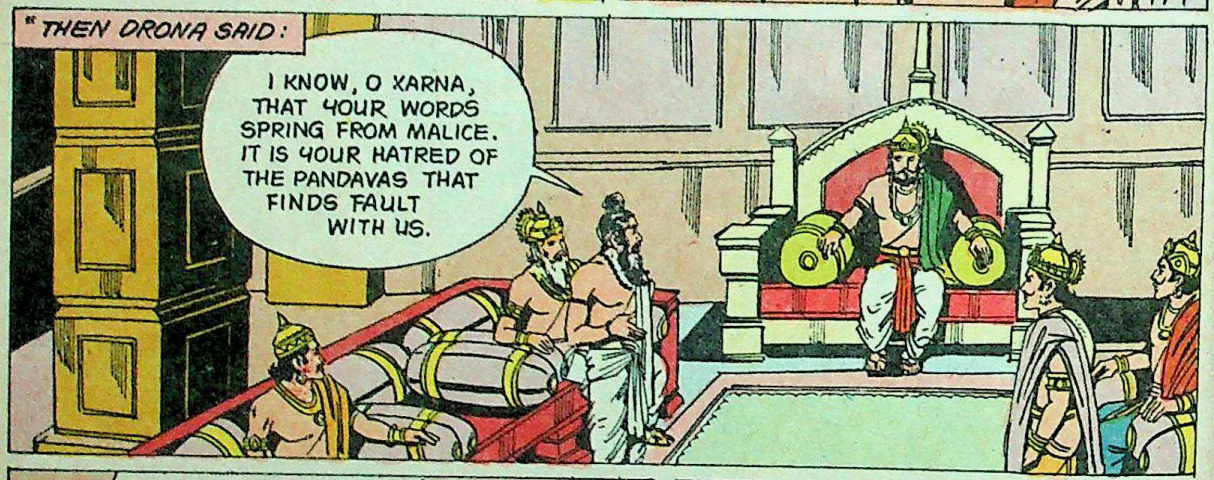

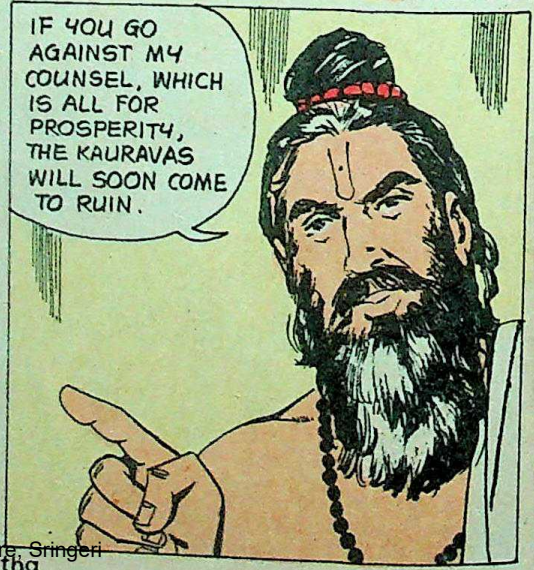

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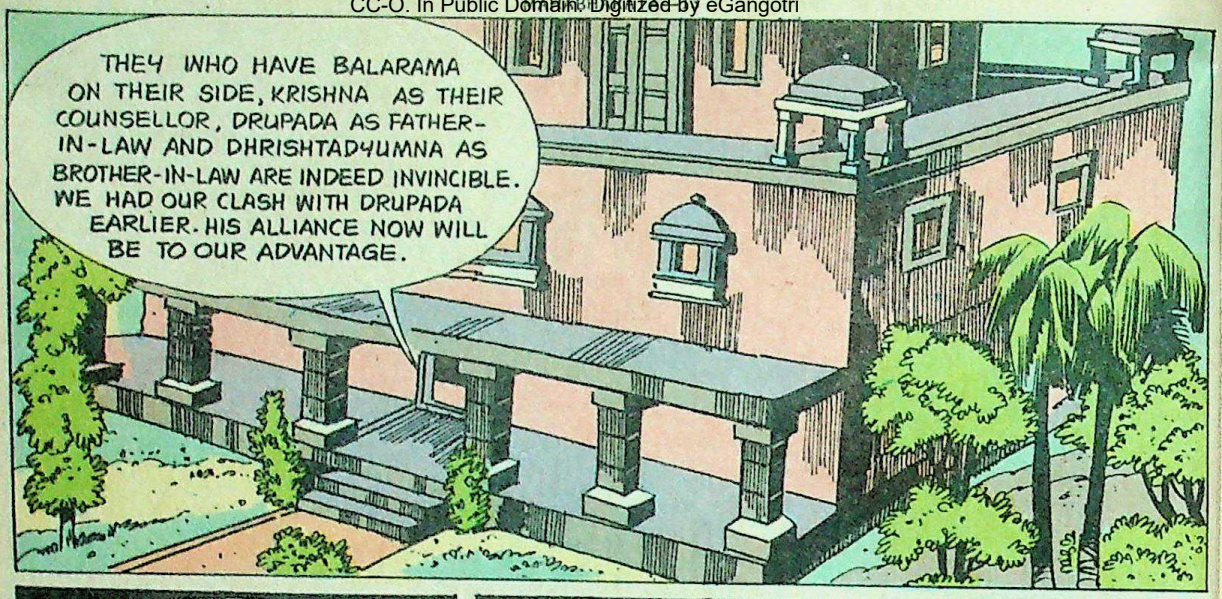

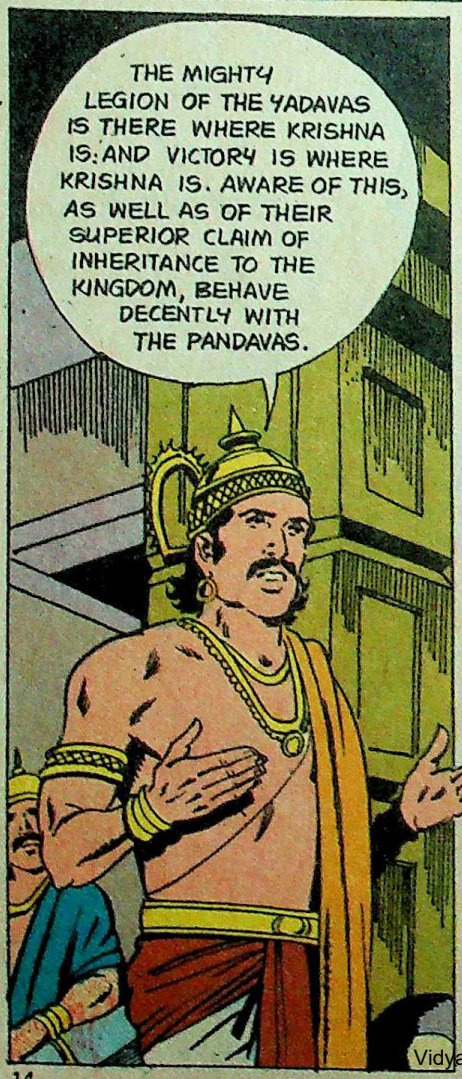

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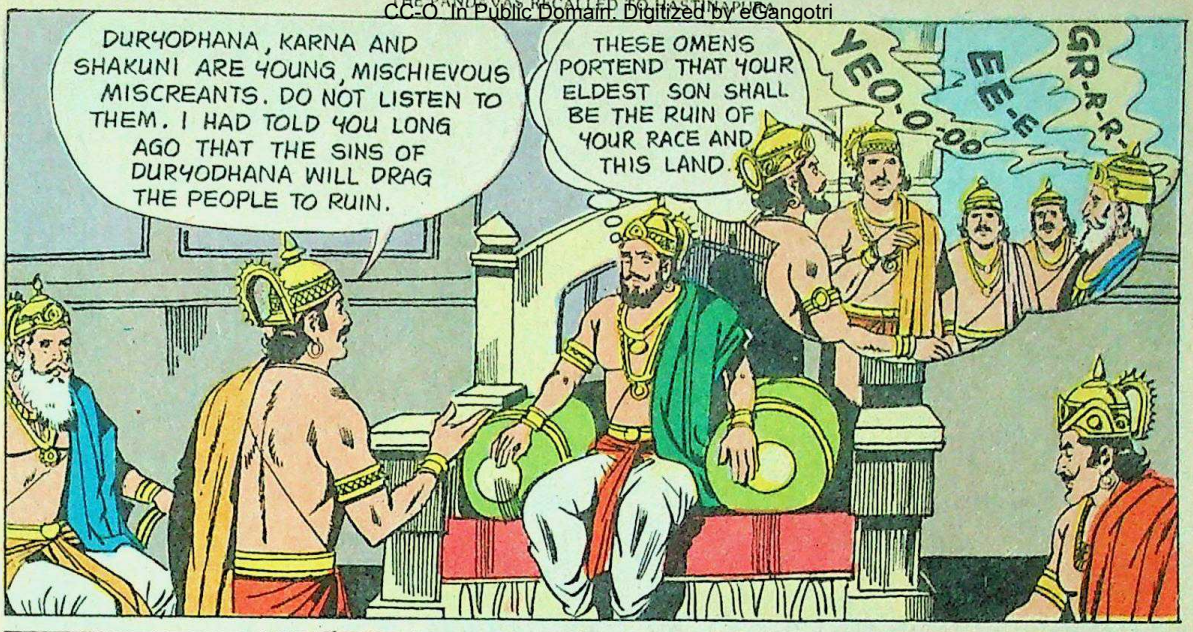

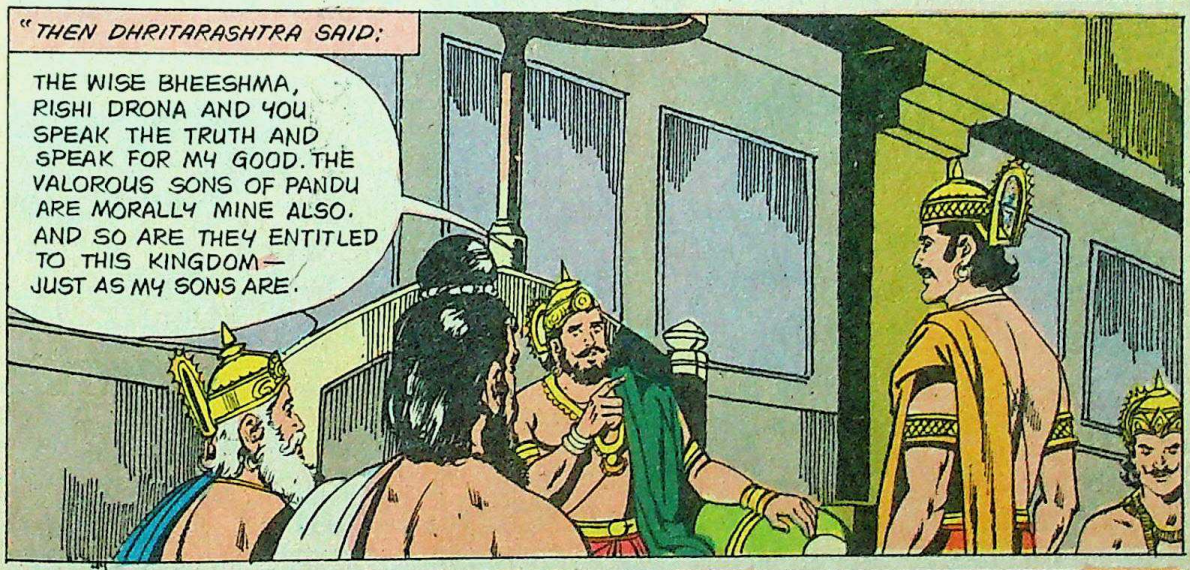

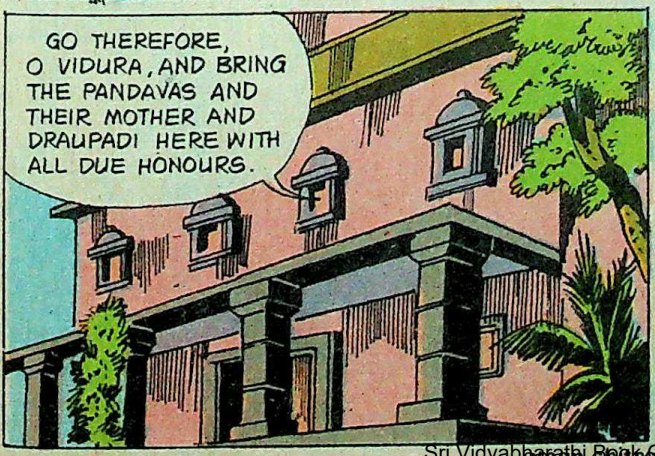

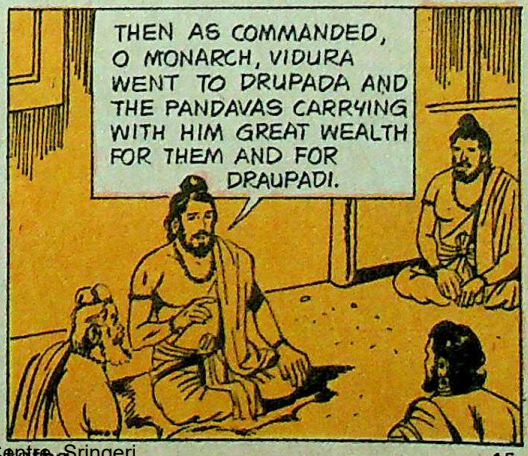

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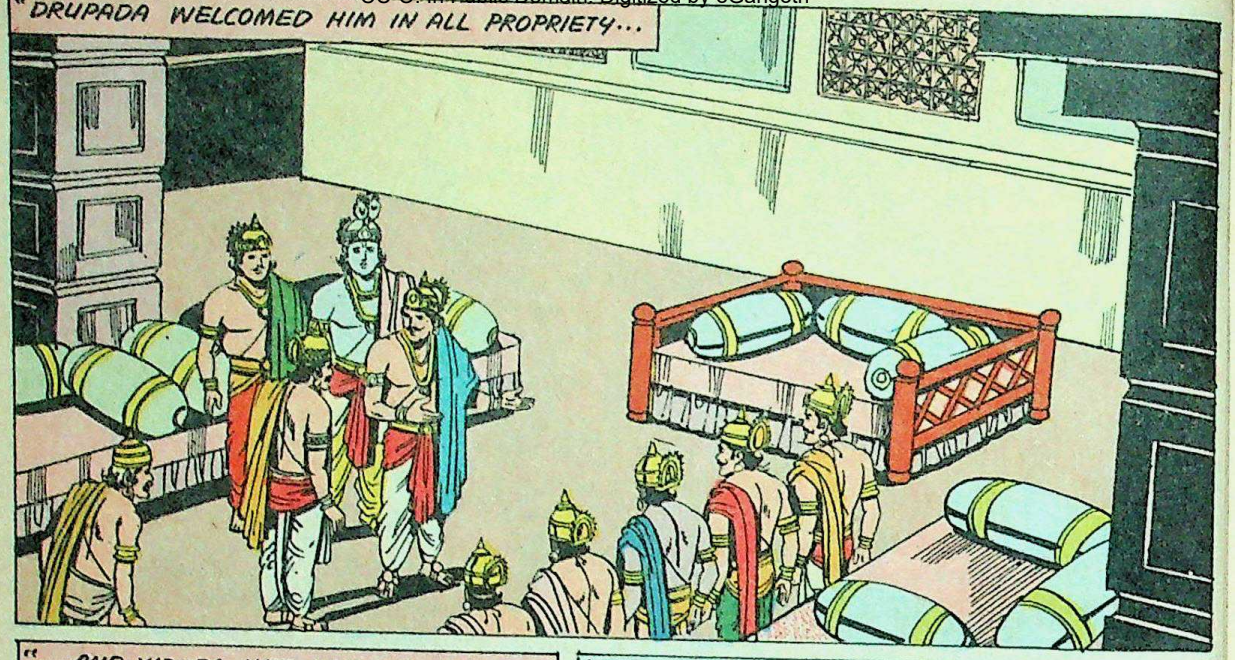

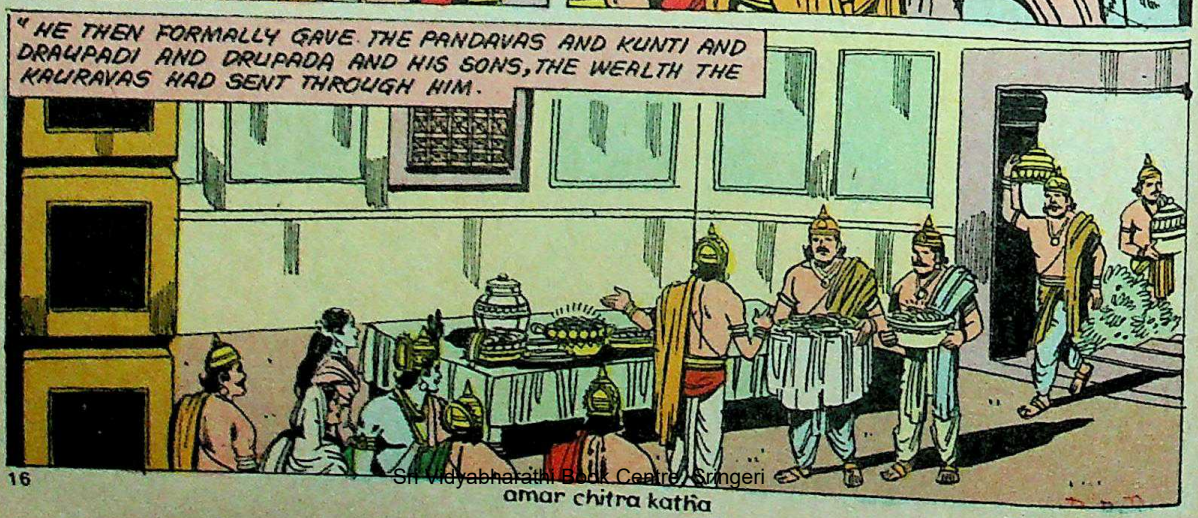

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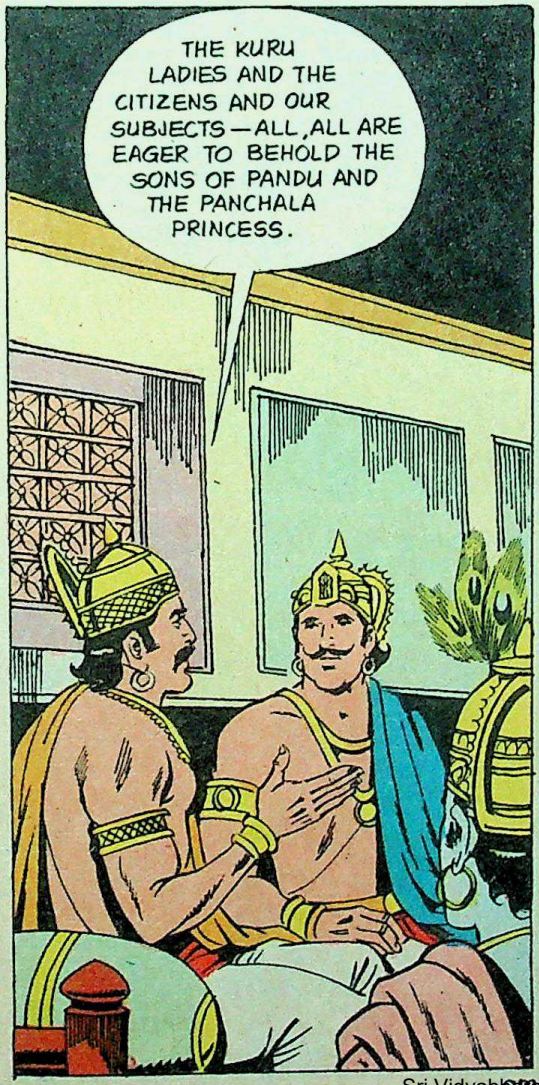

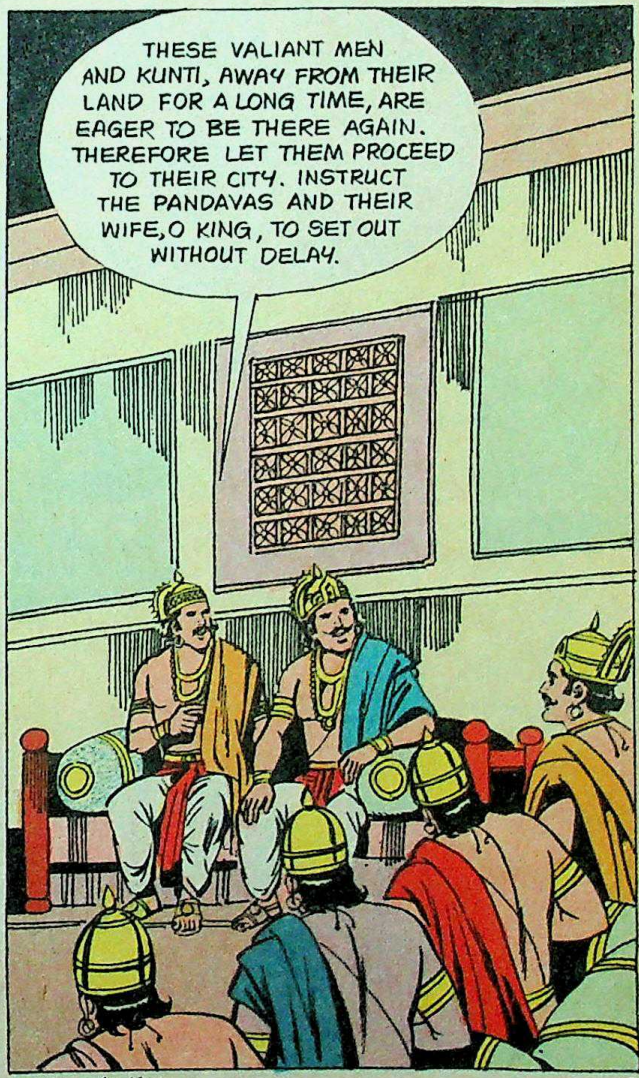

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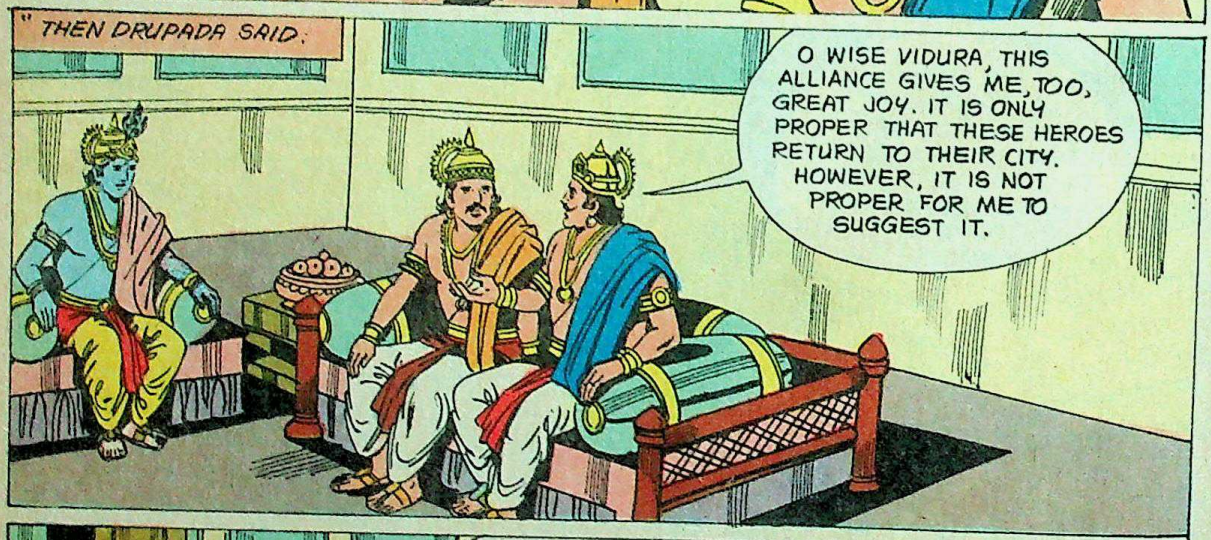

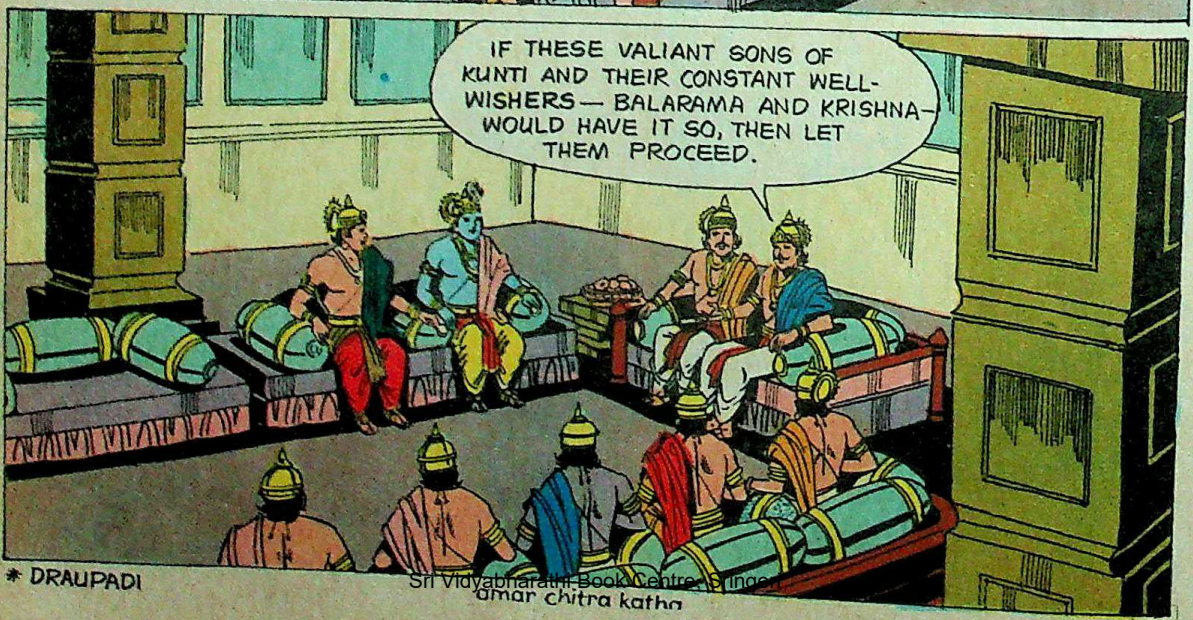

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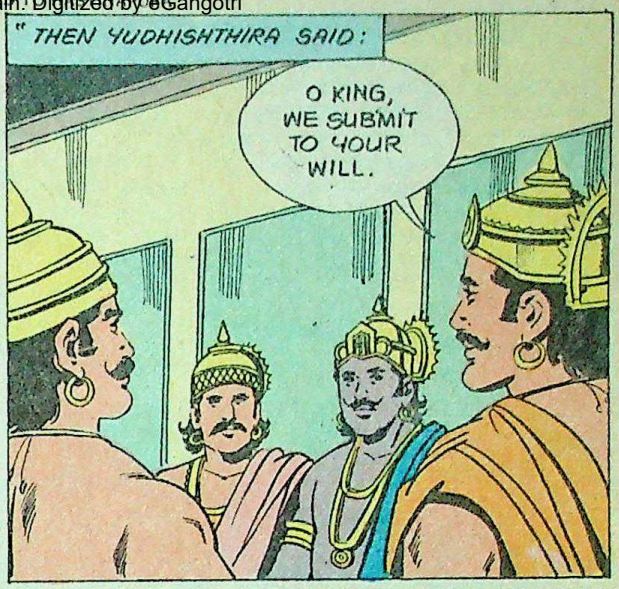

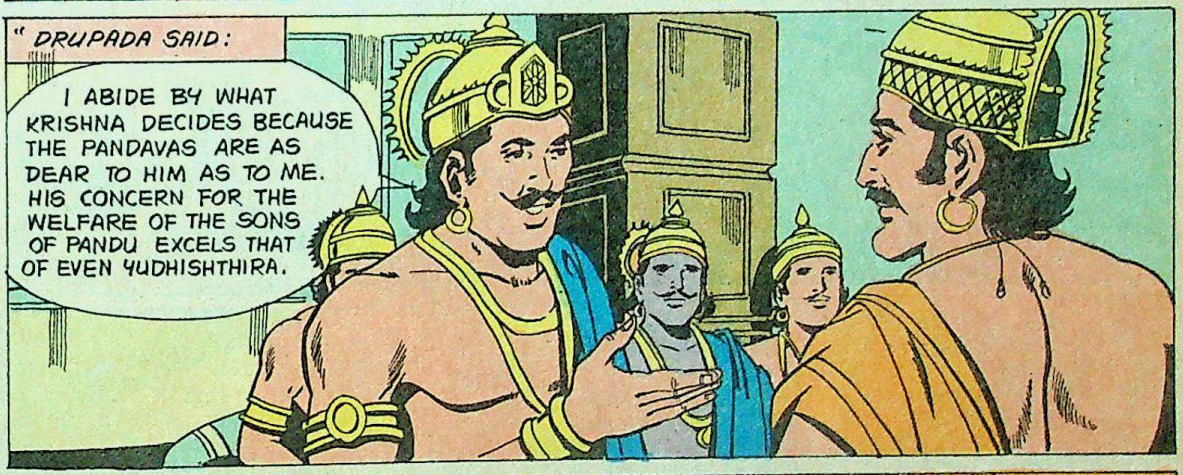

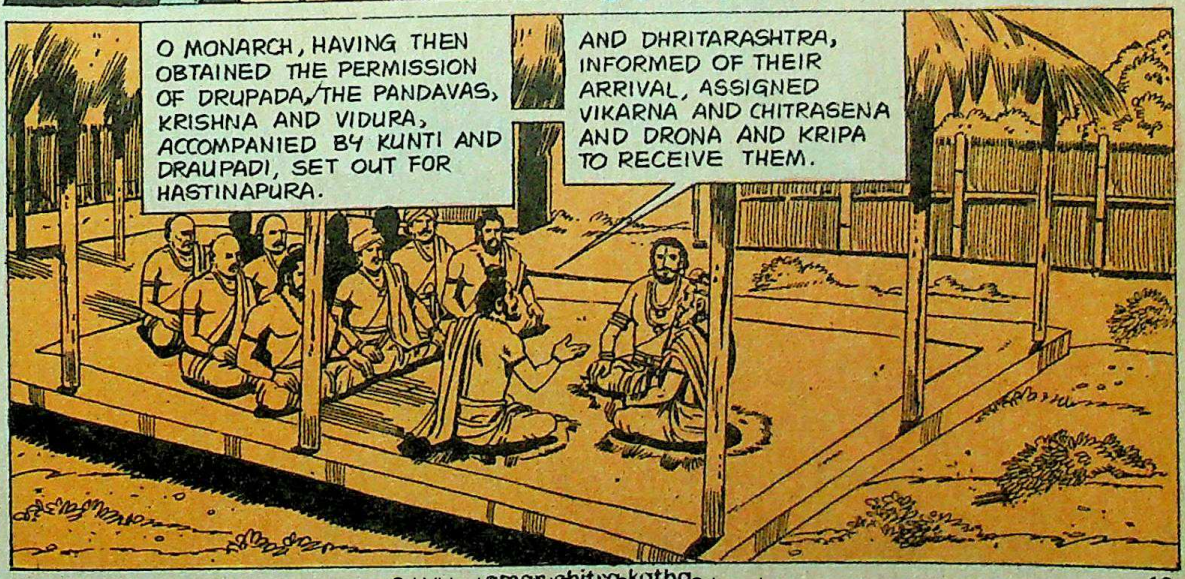

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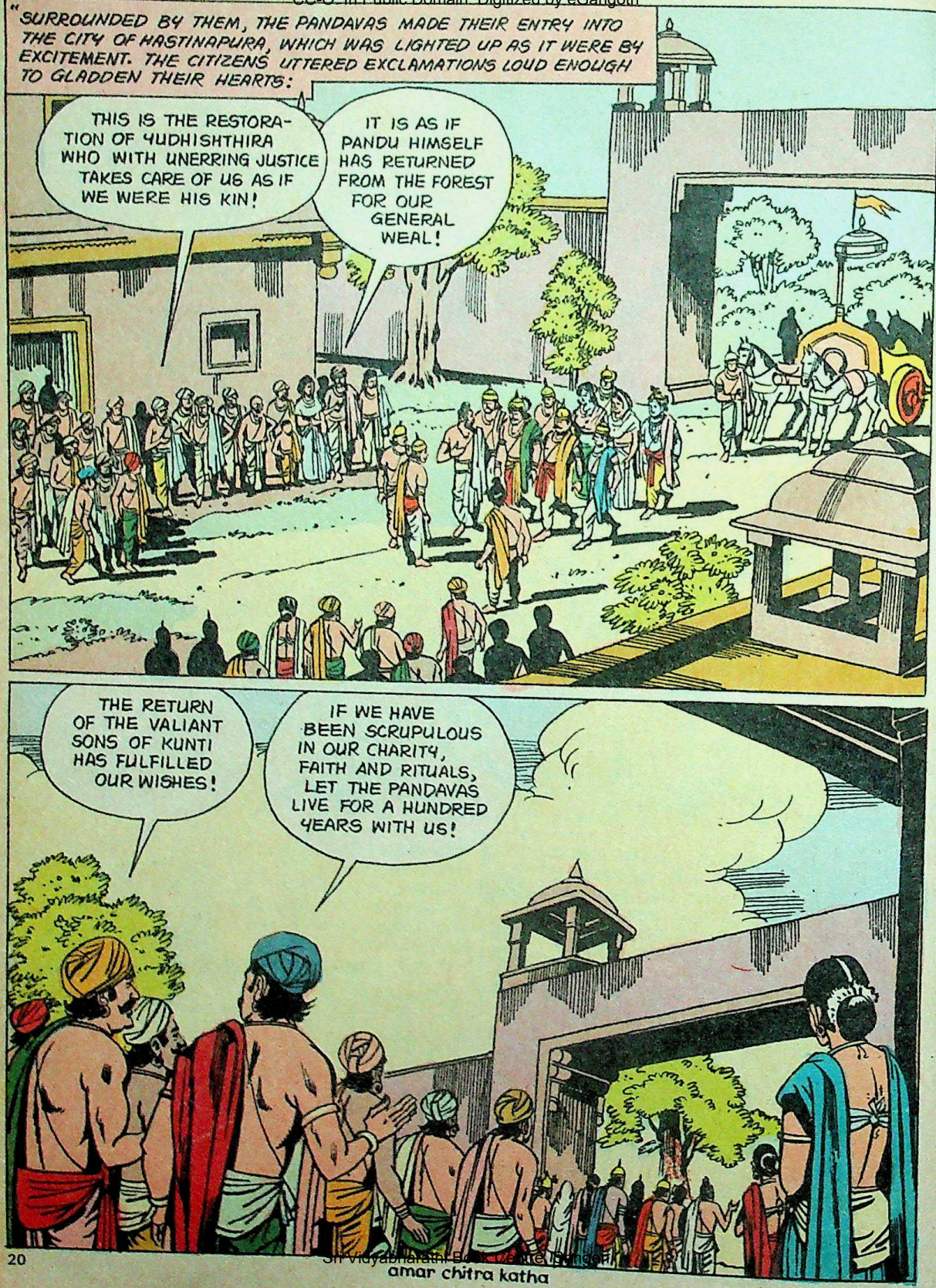

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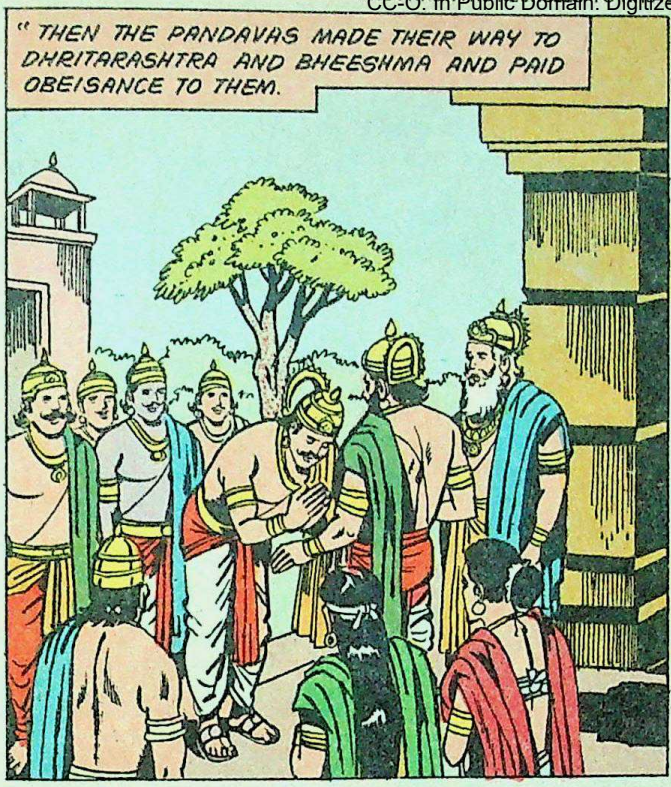

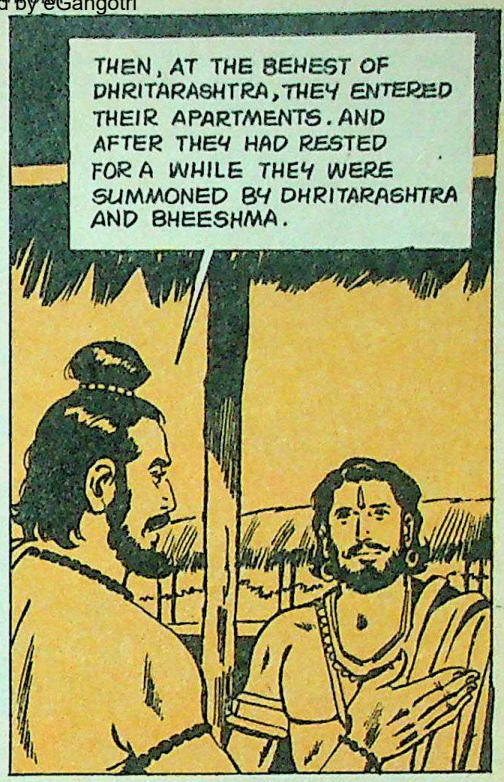

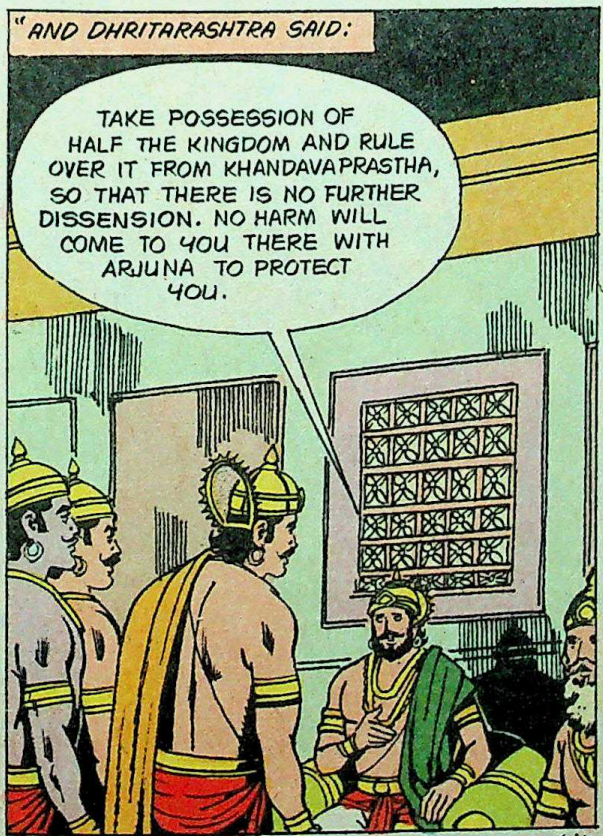

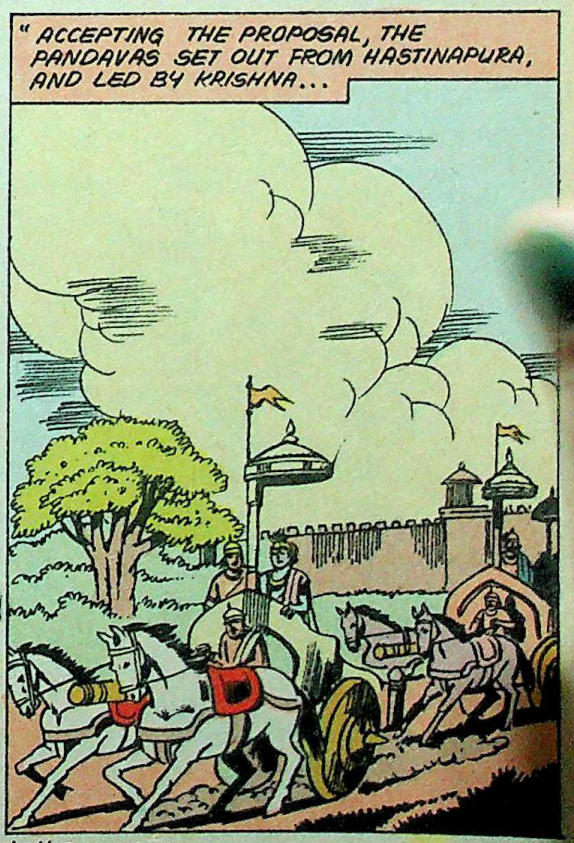

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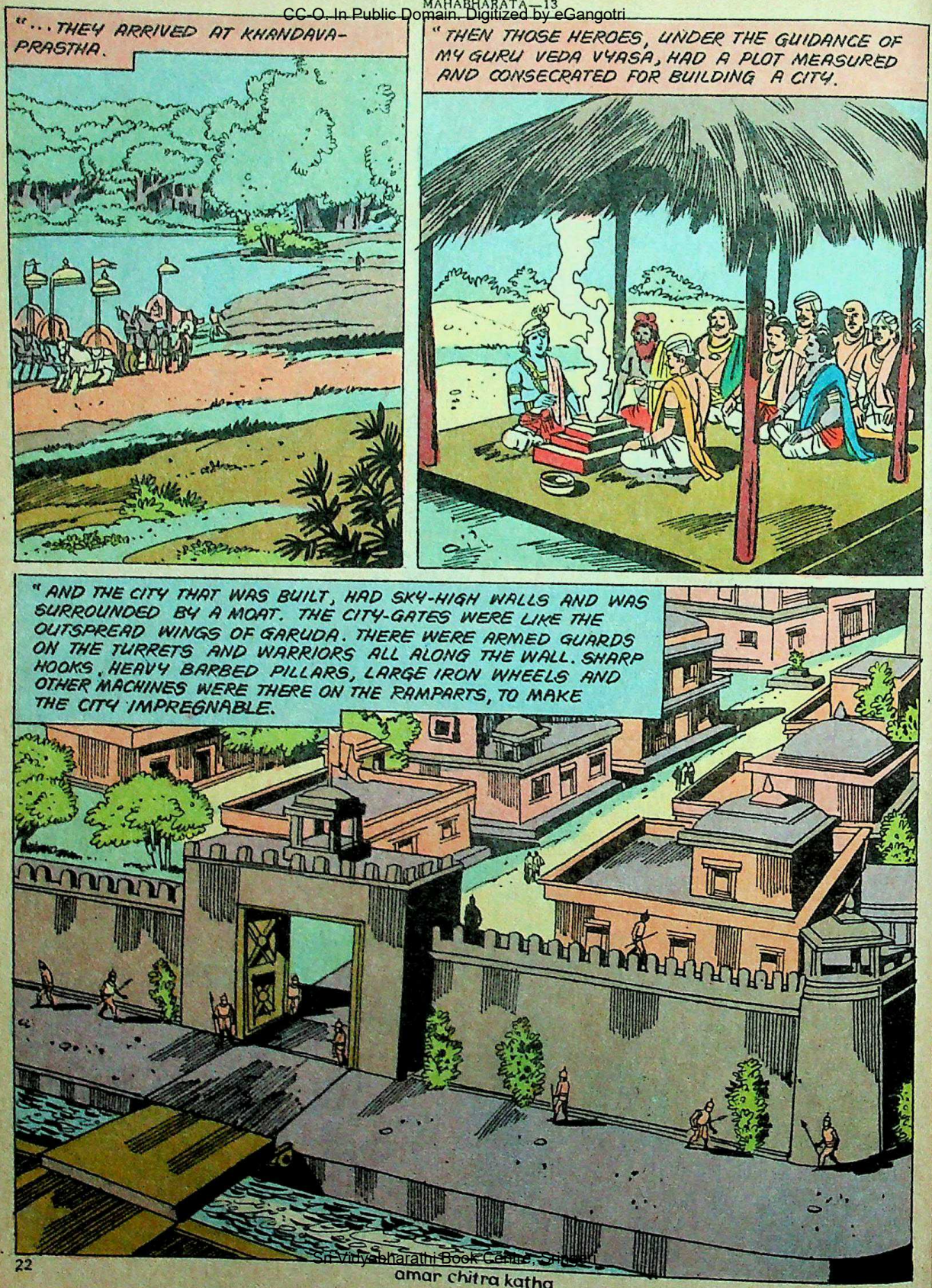

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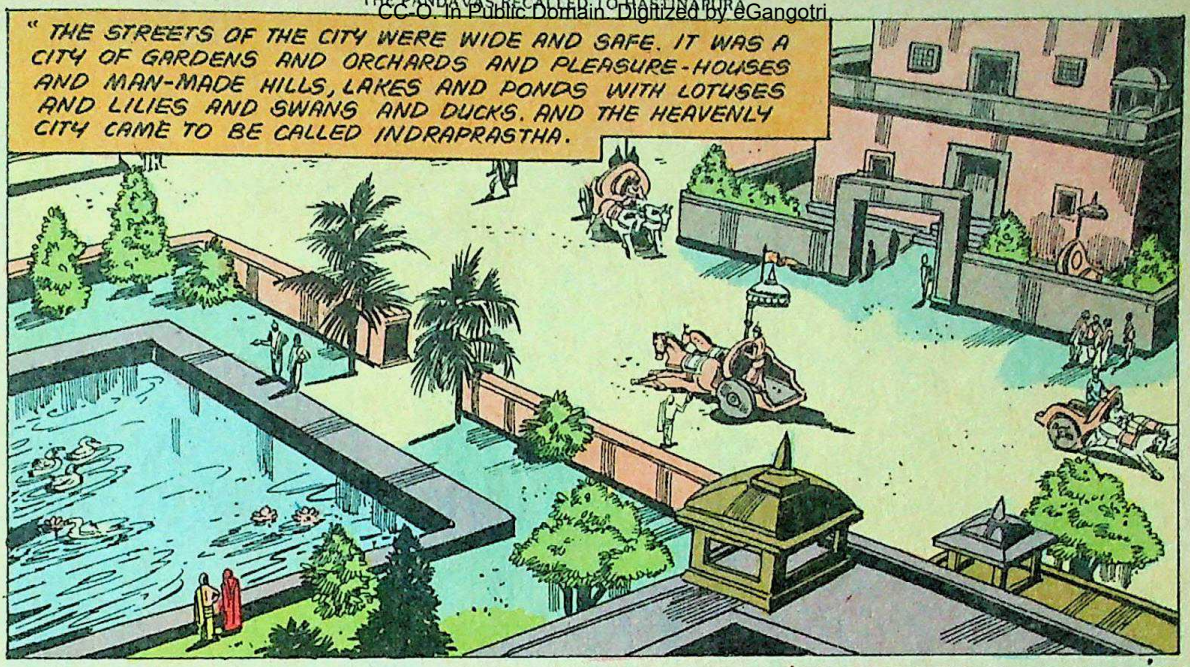

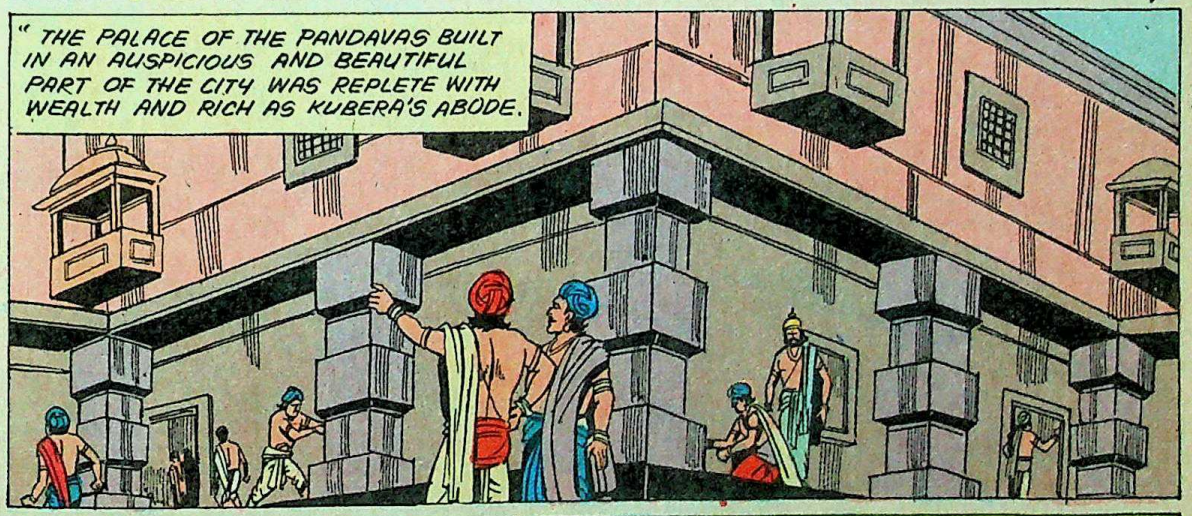

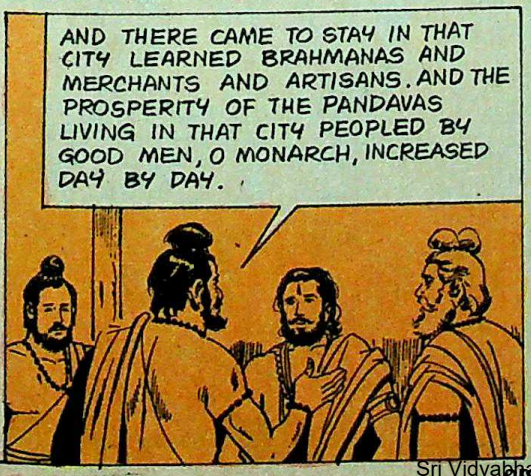

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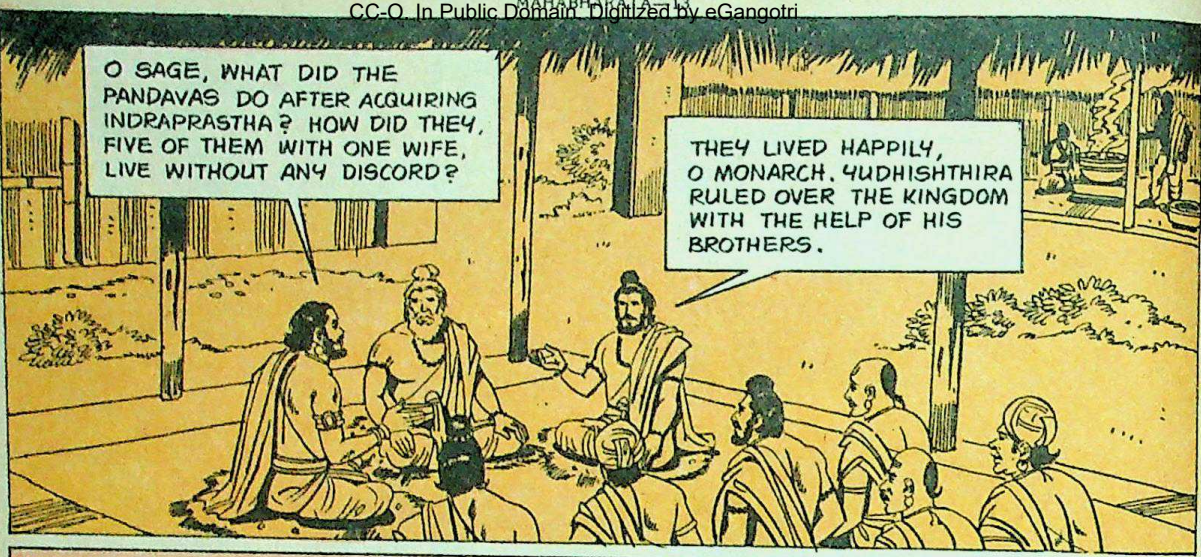

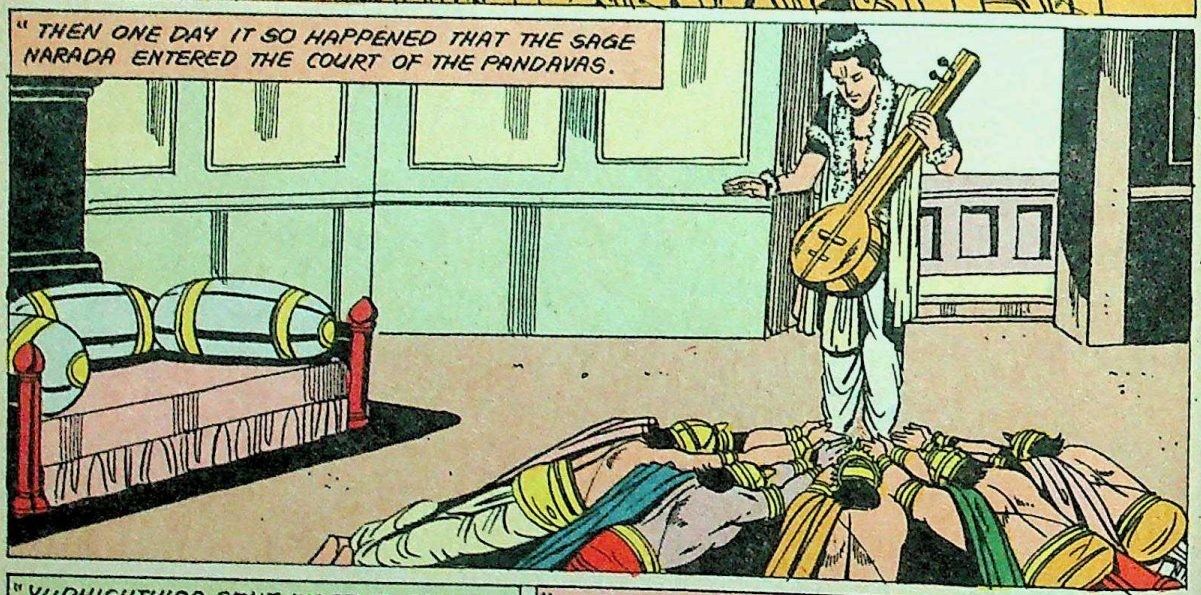

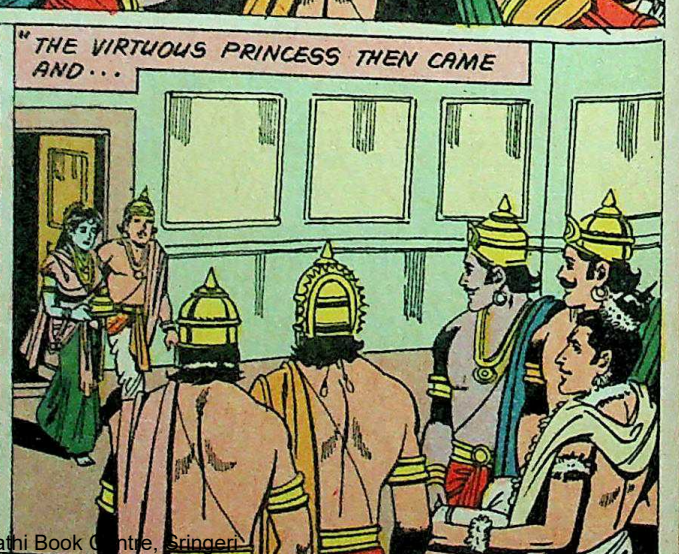

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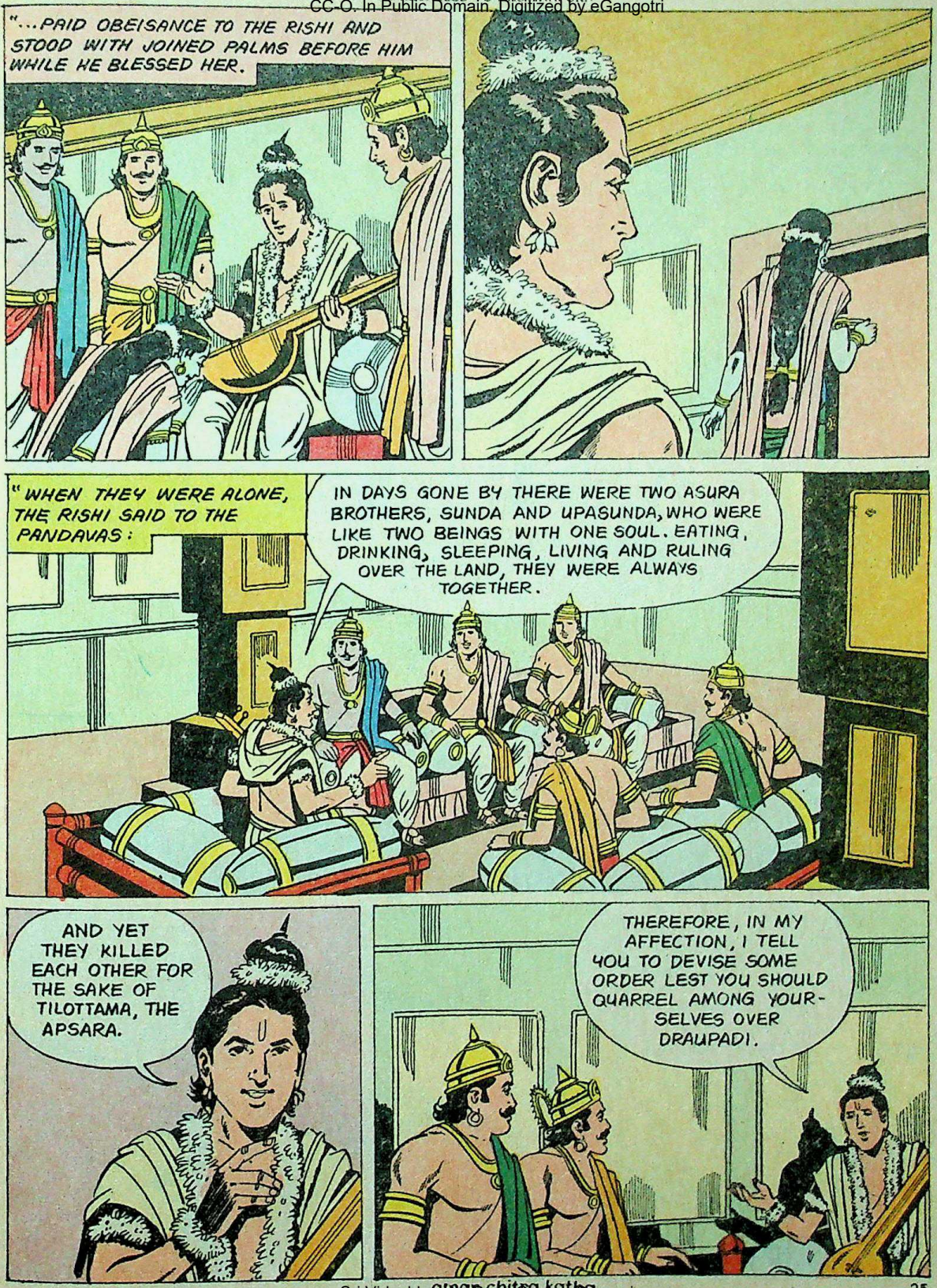

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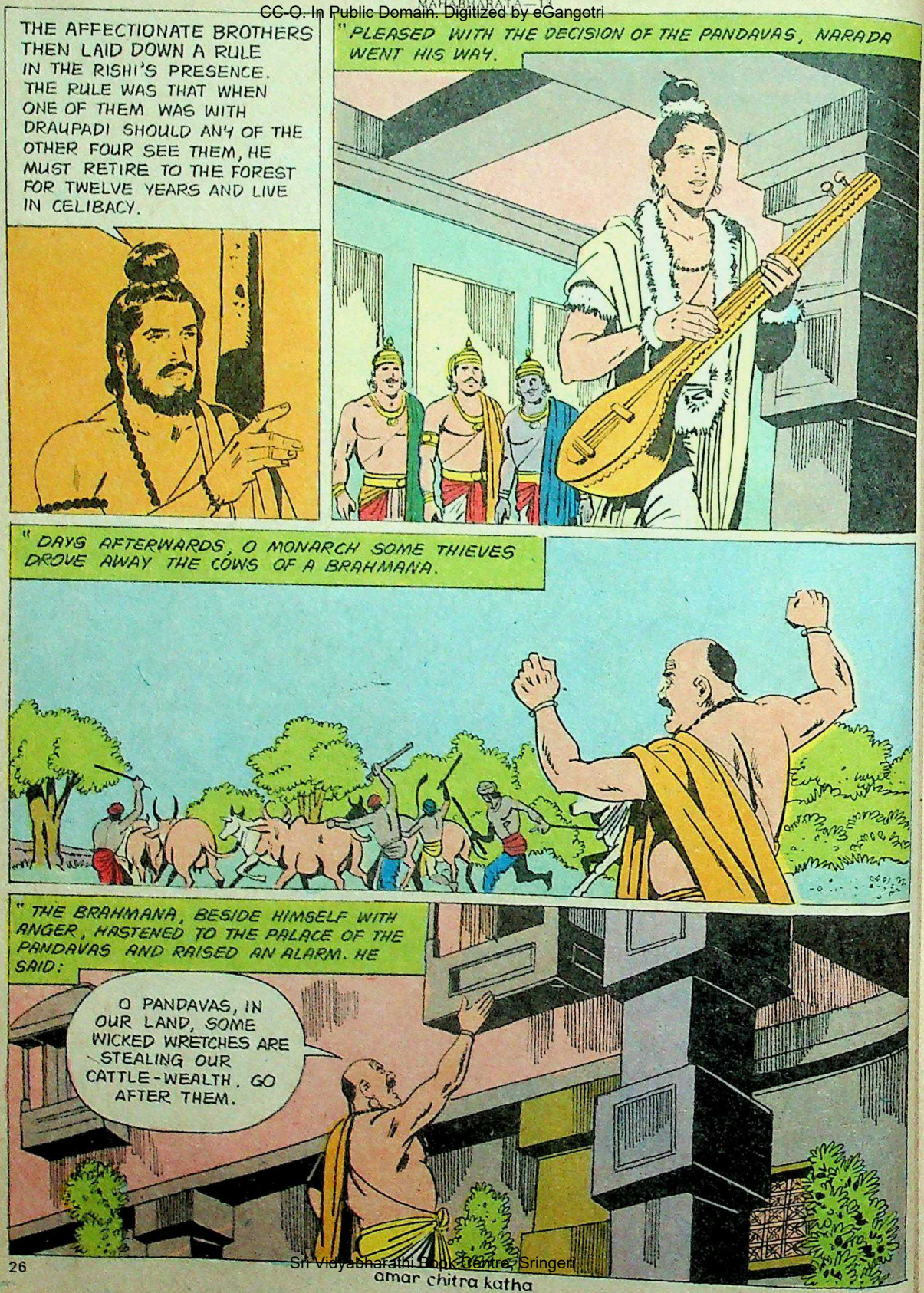

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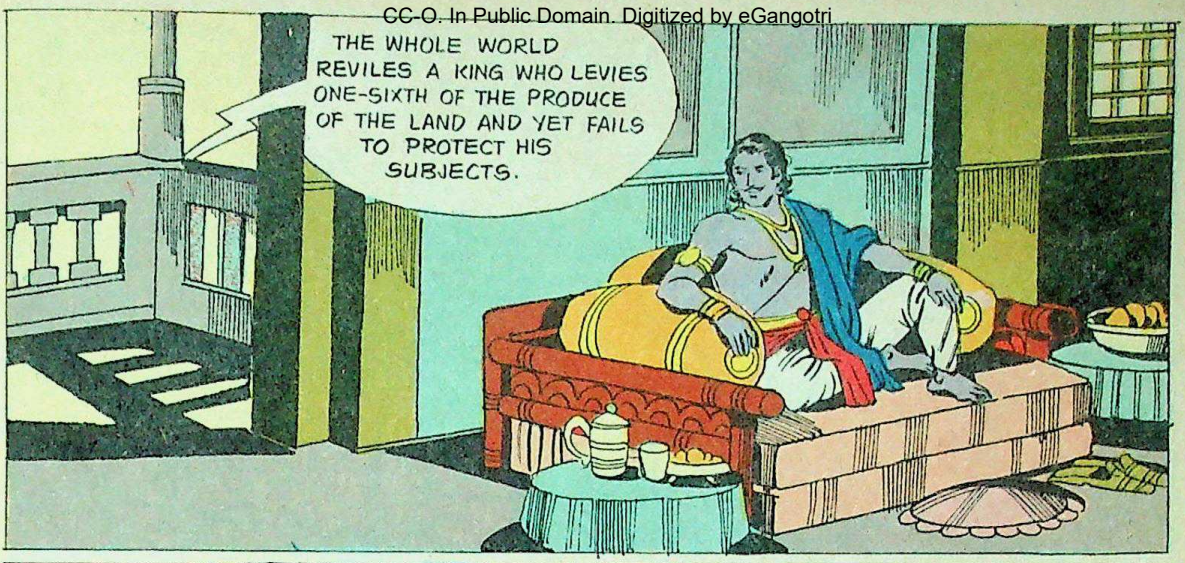

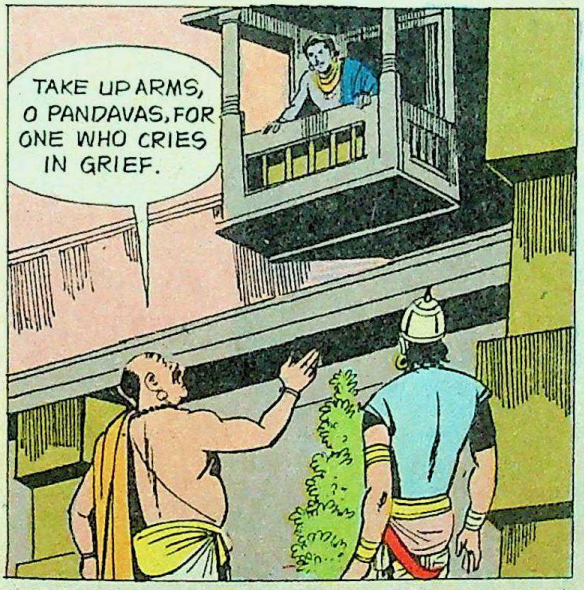

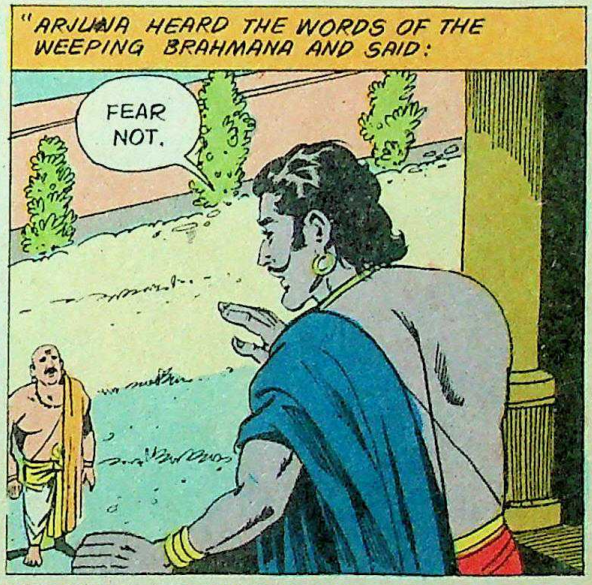

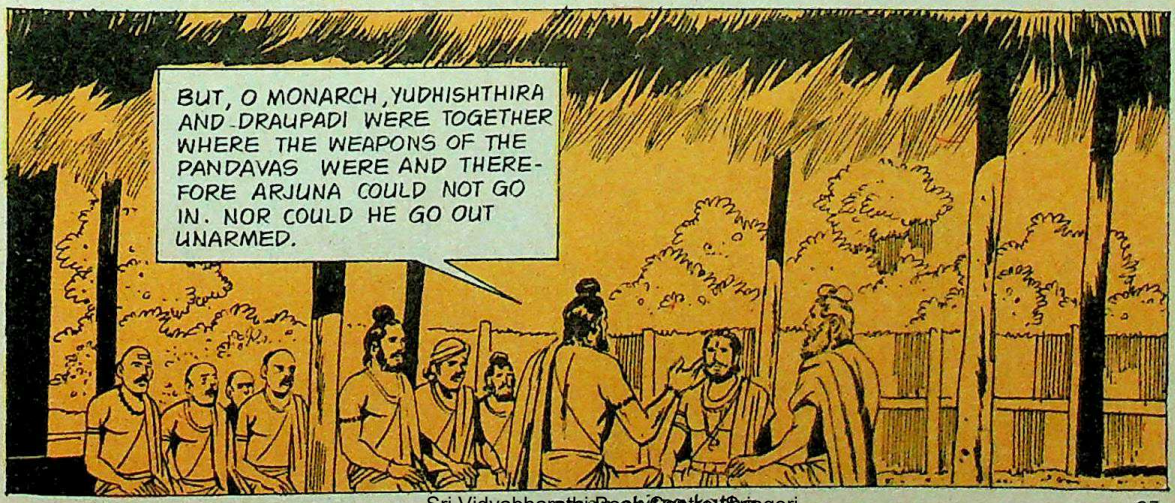

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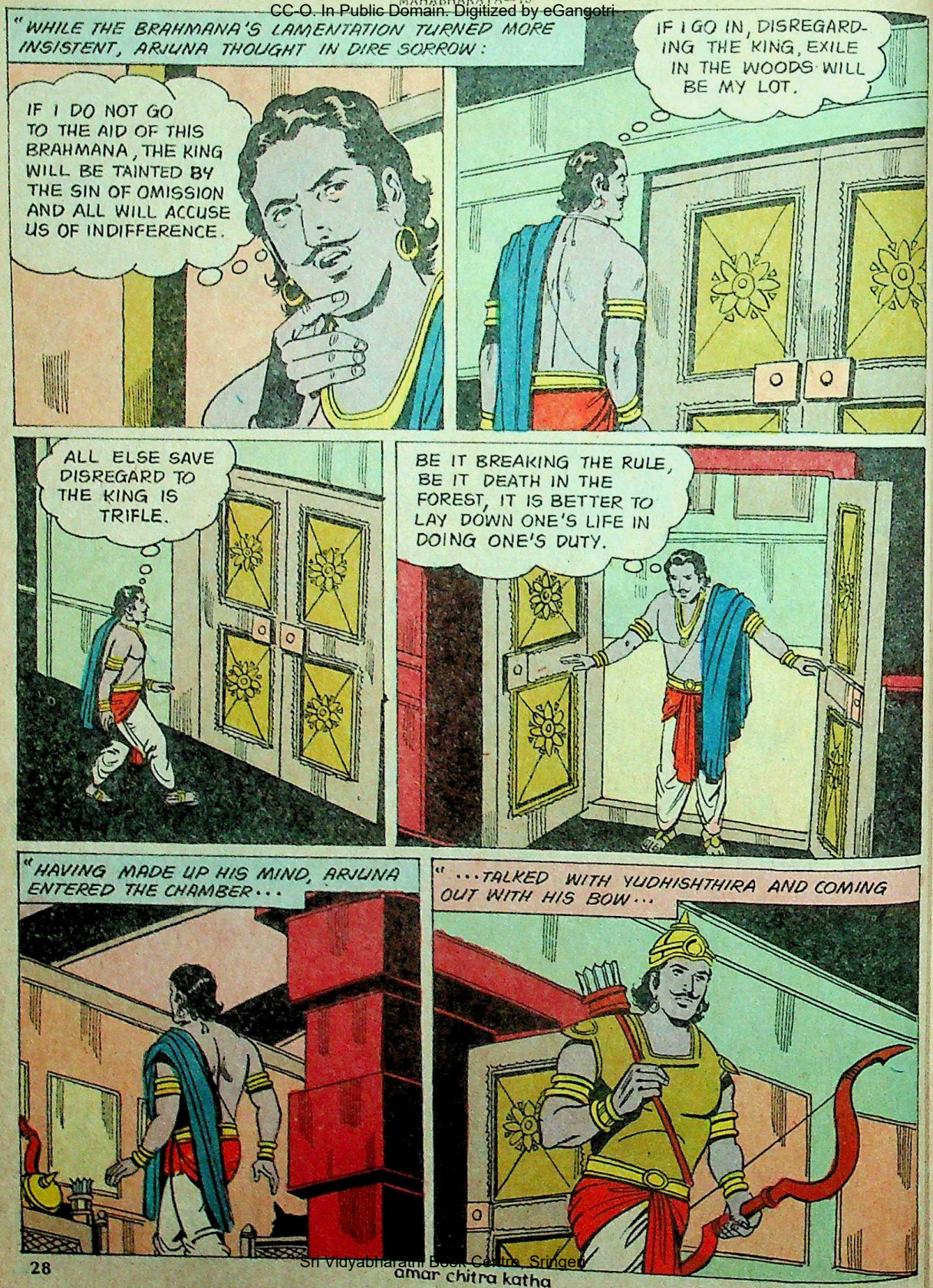

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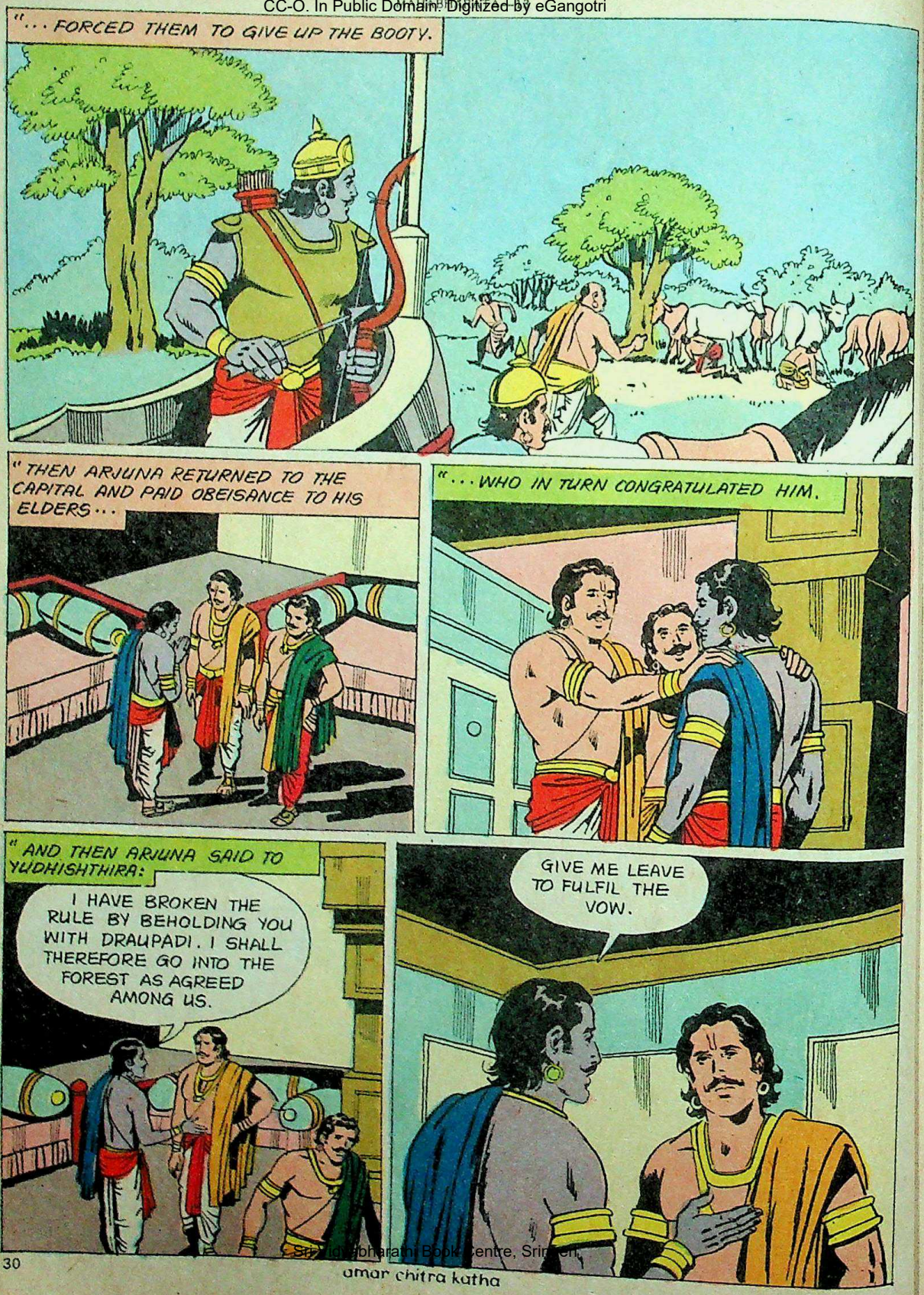

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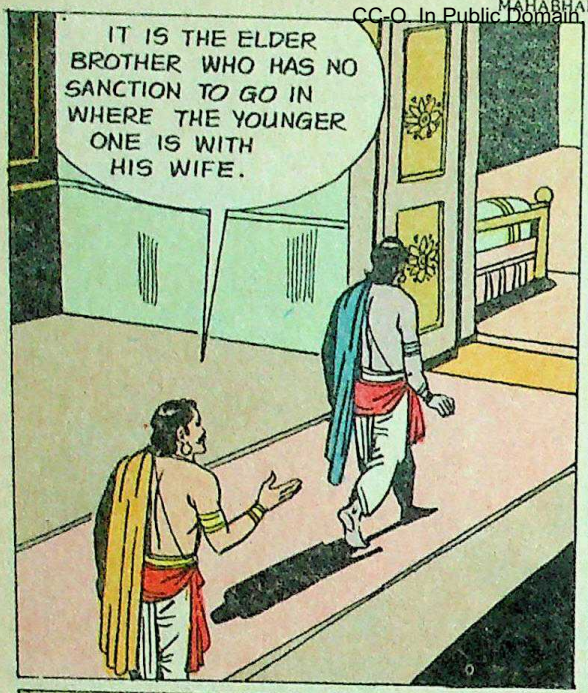

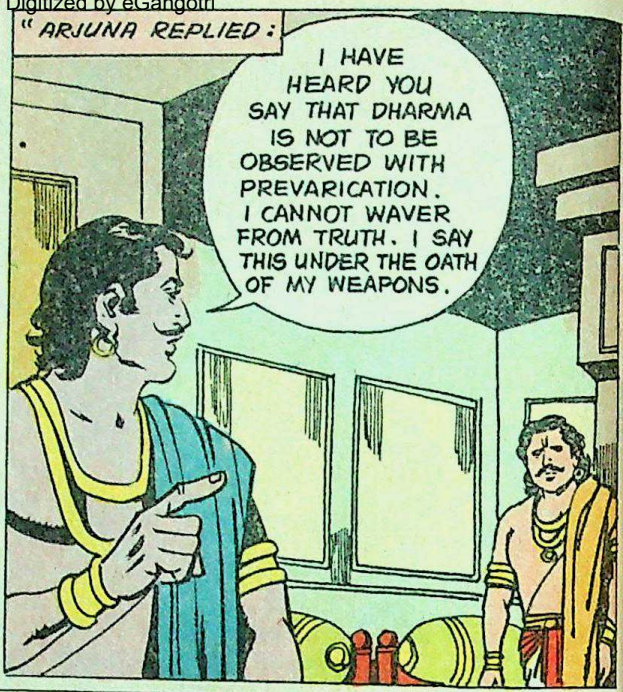

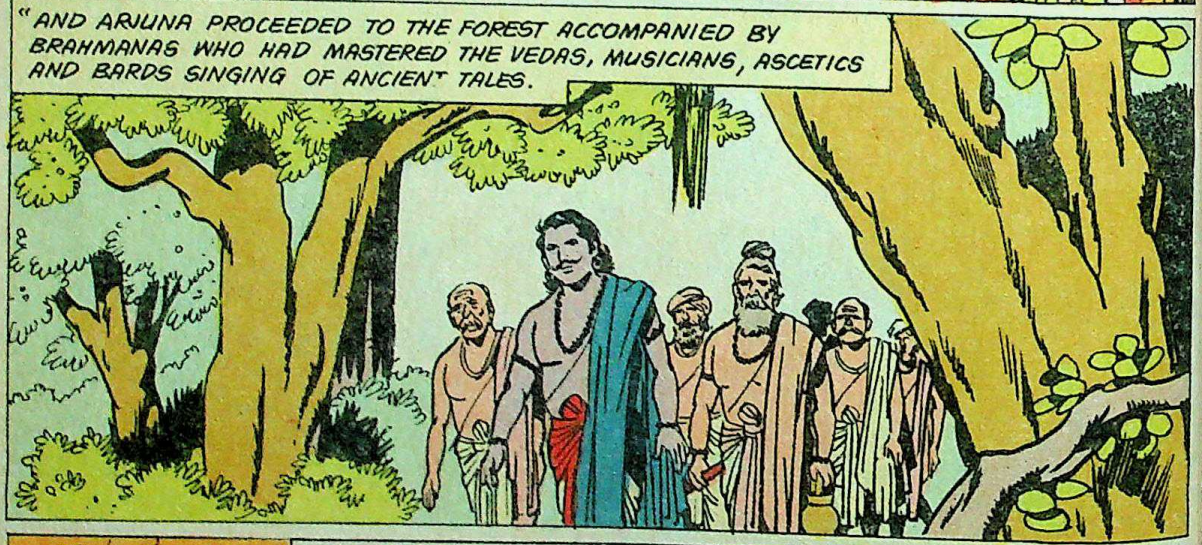

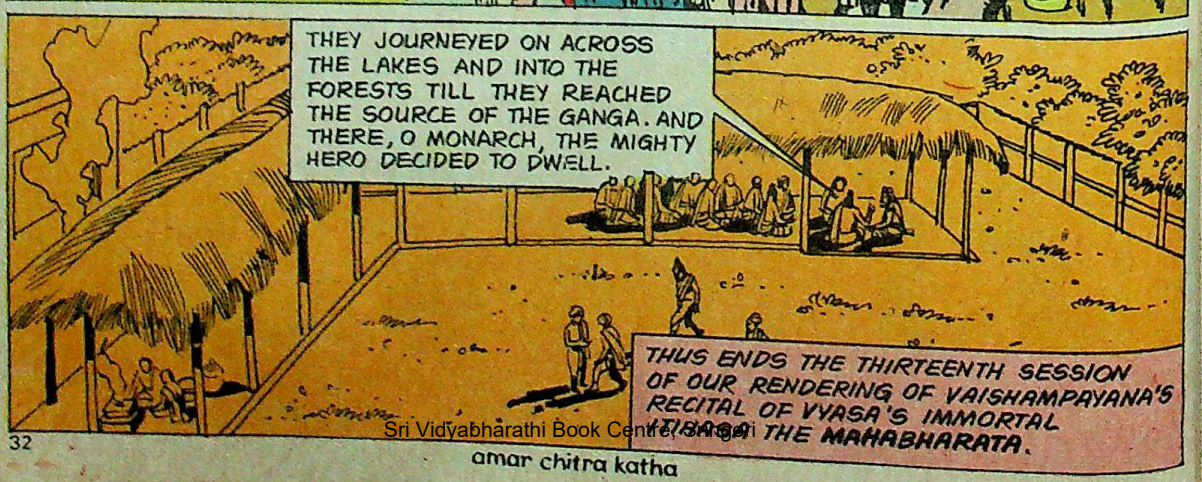

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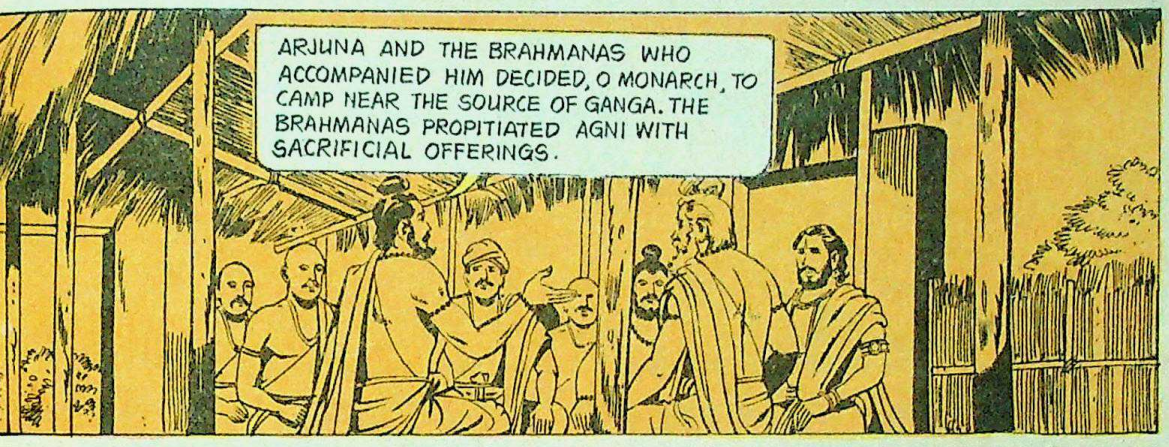
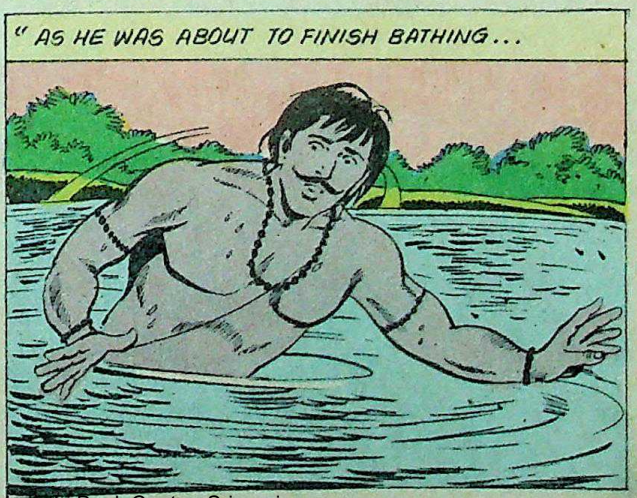
Mahabharata – 14

ARJUNA'S 12-YEAR EXILE





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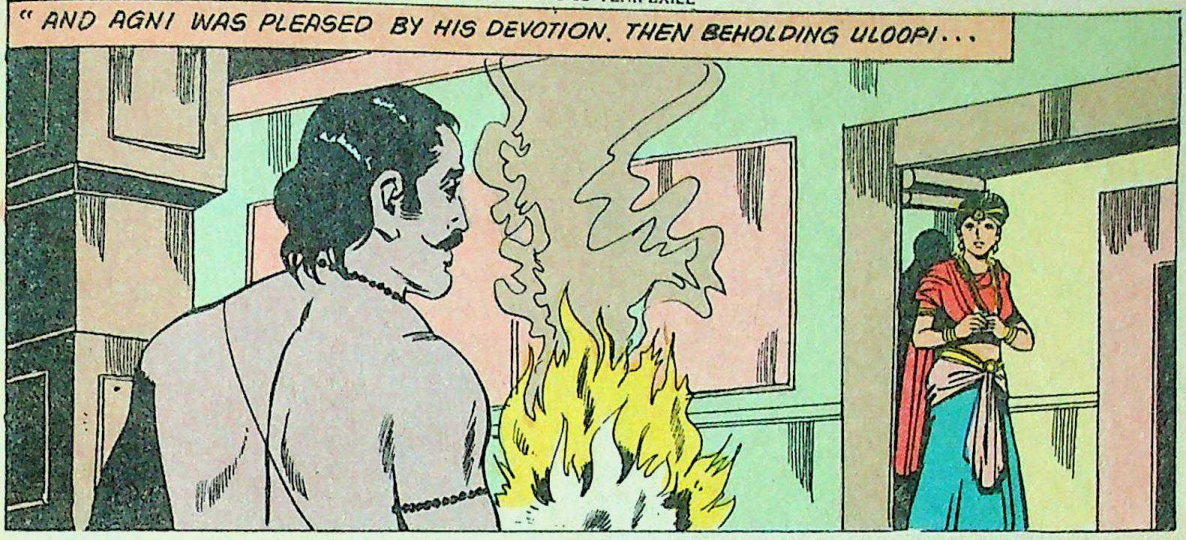

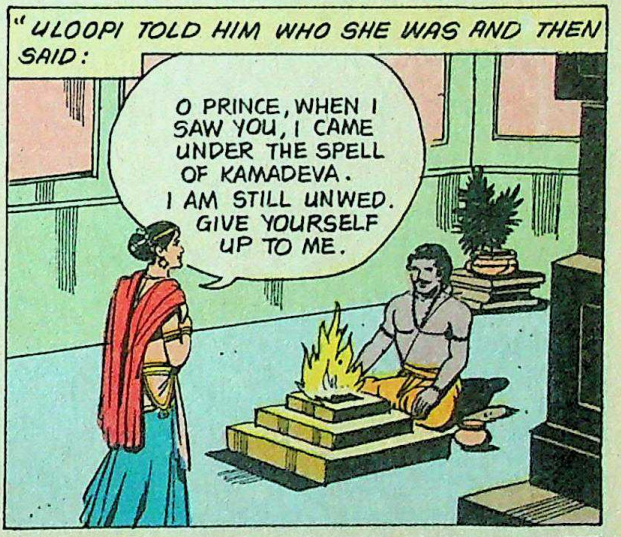

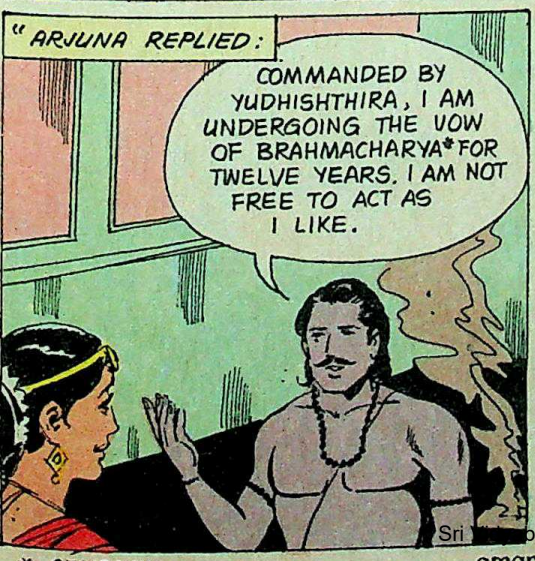

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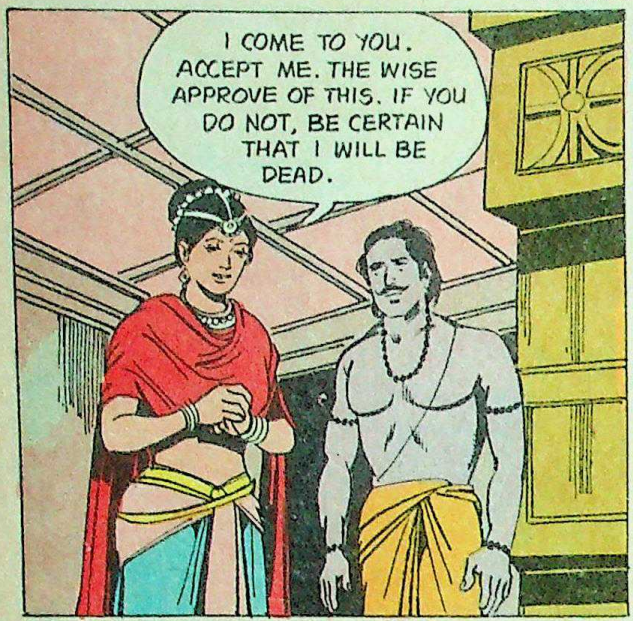

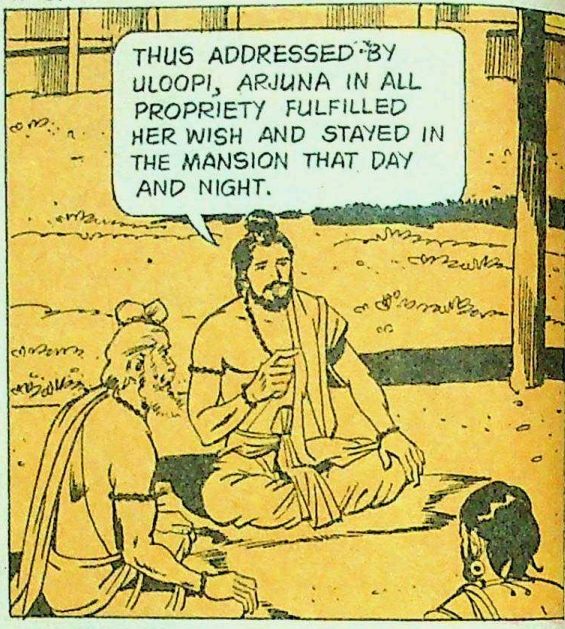

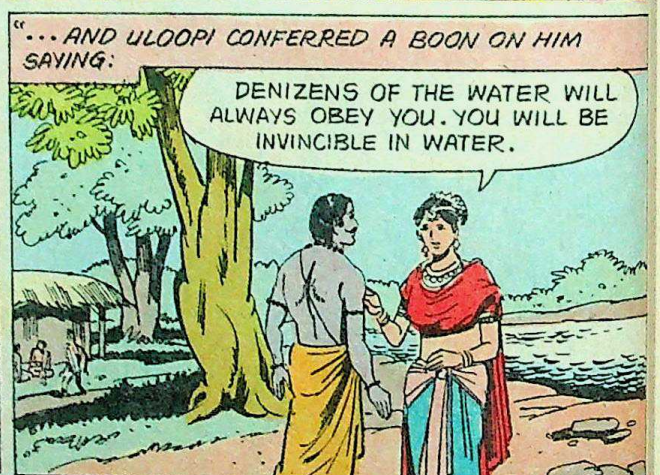

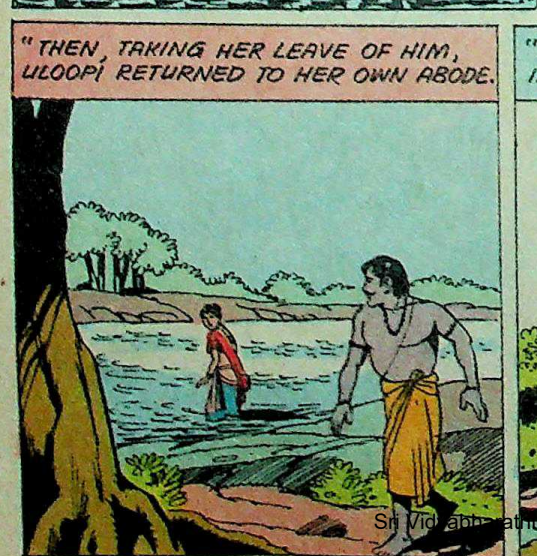

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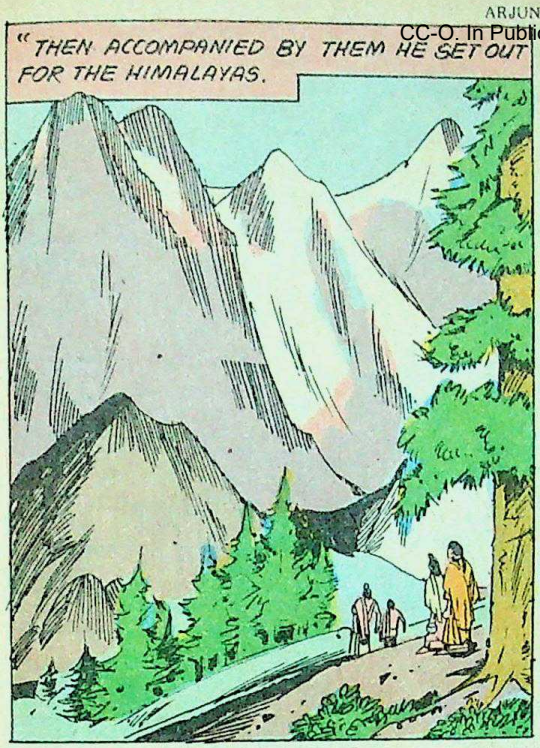

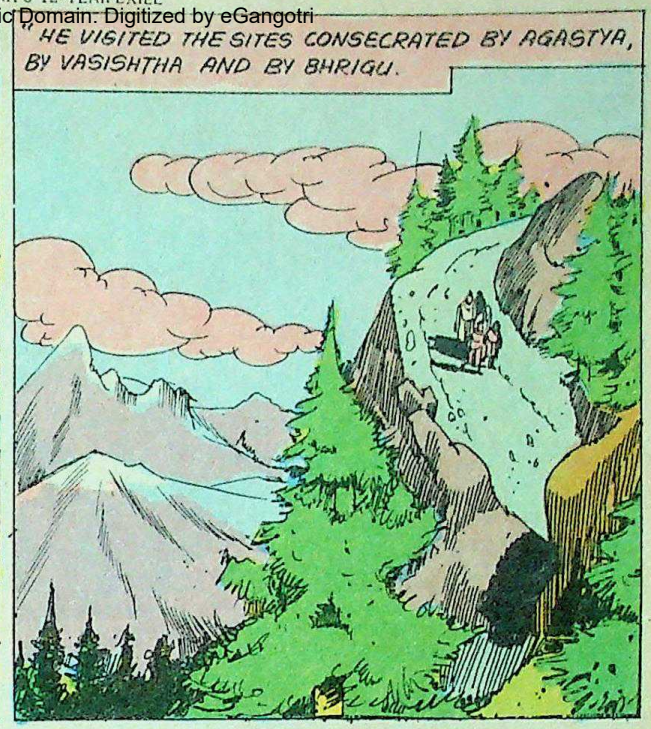

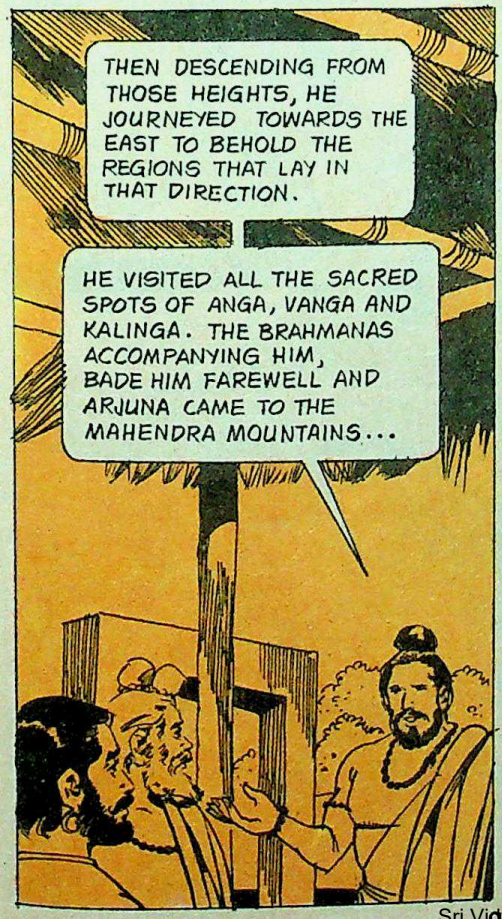

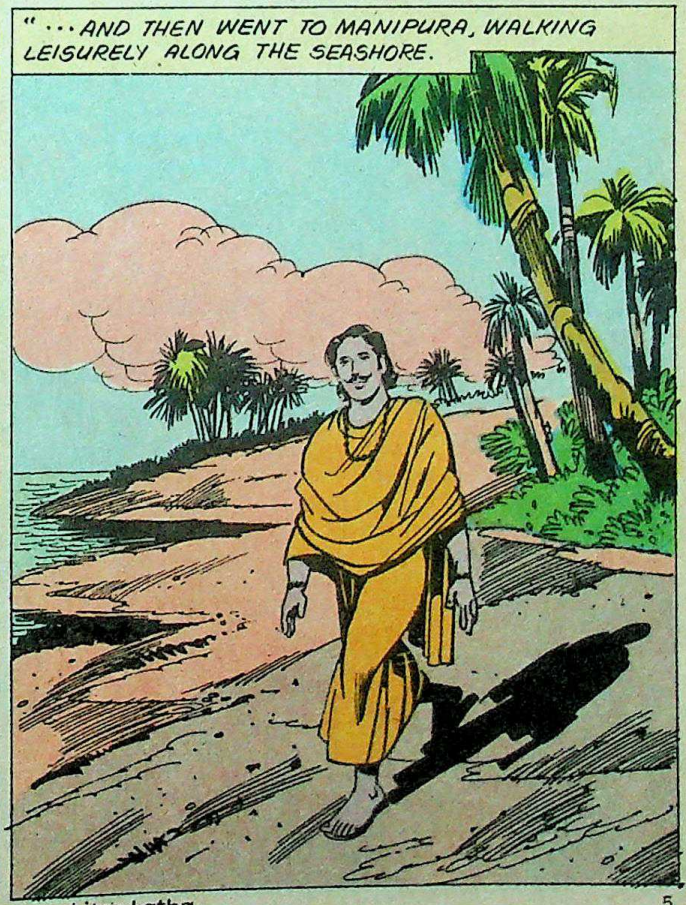

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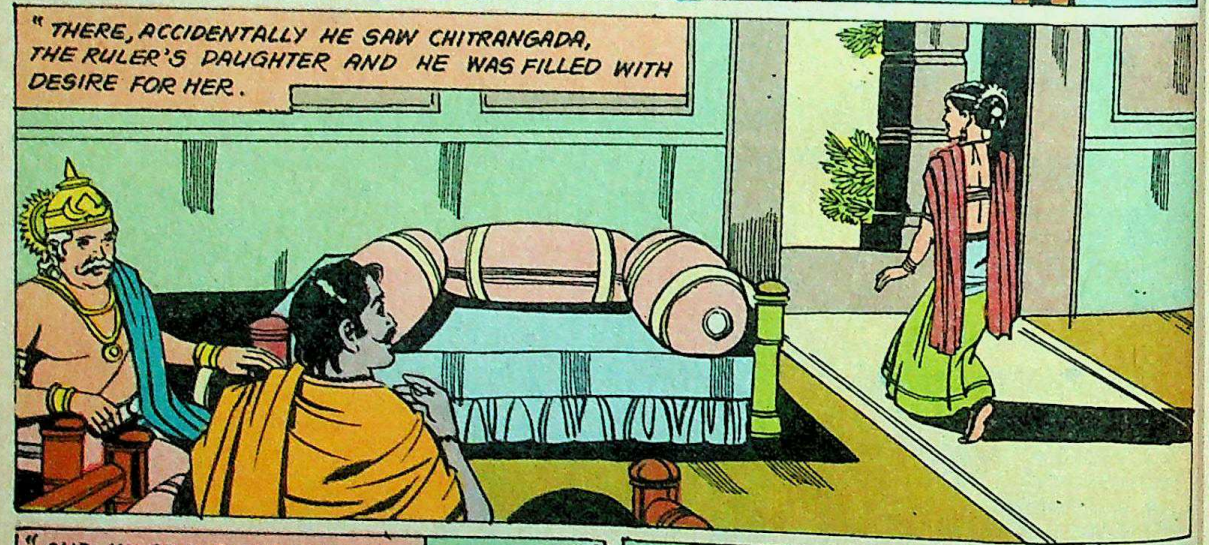

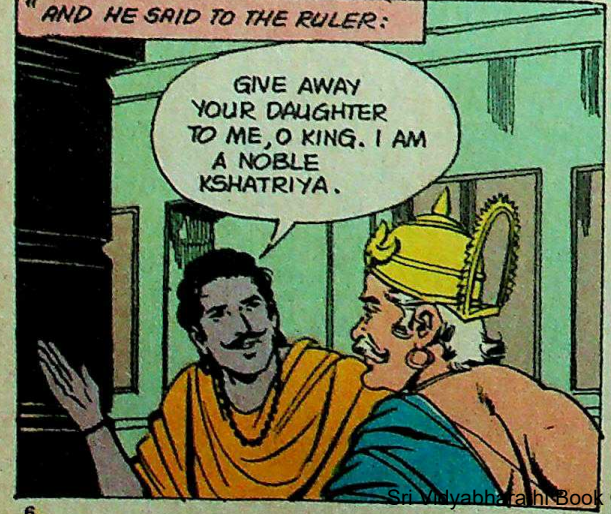

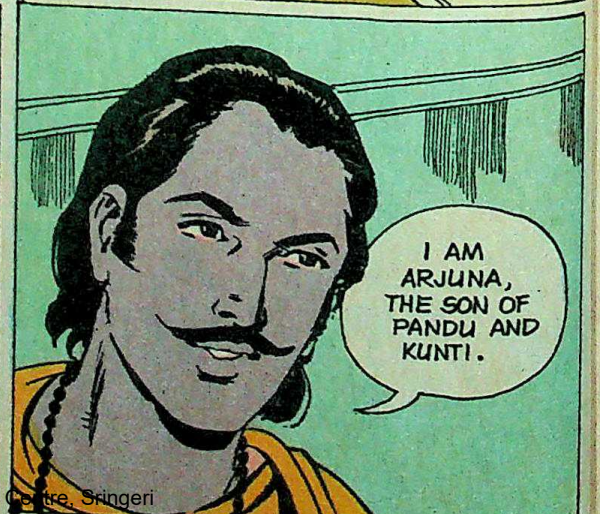

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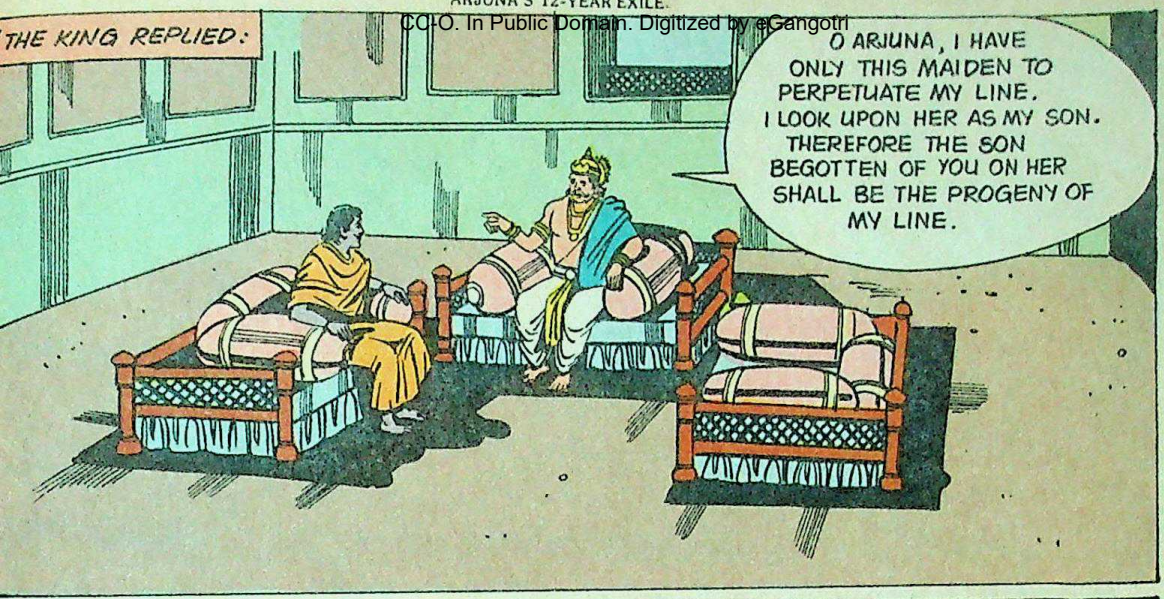

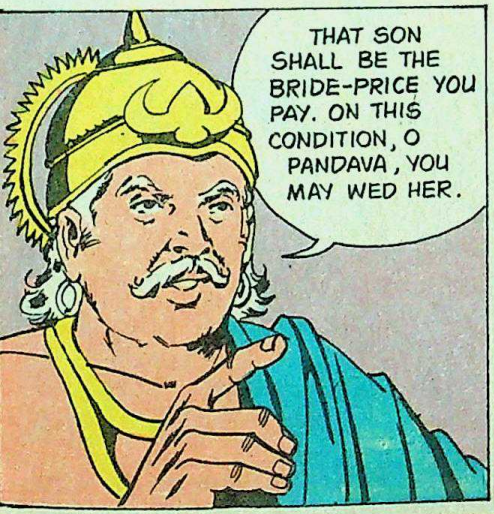

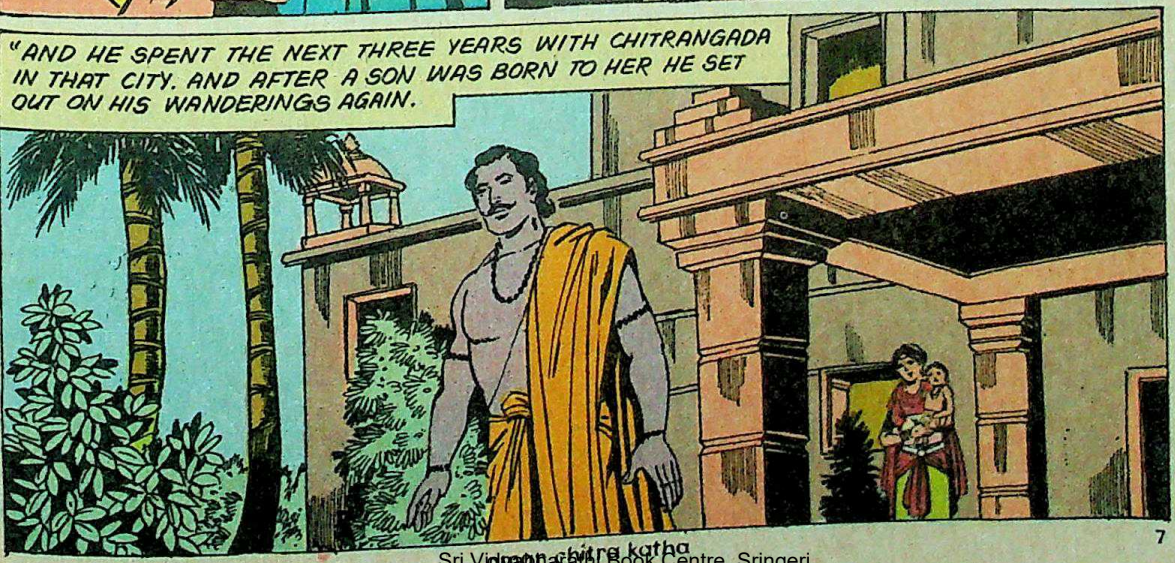

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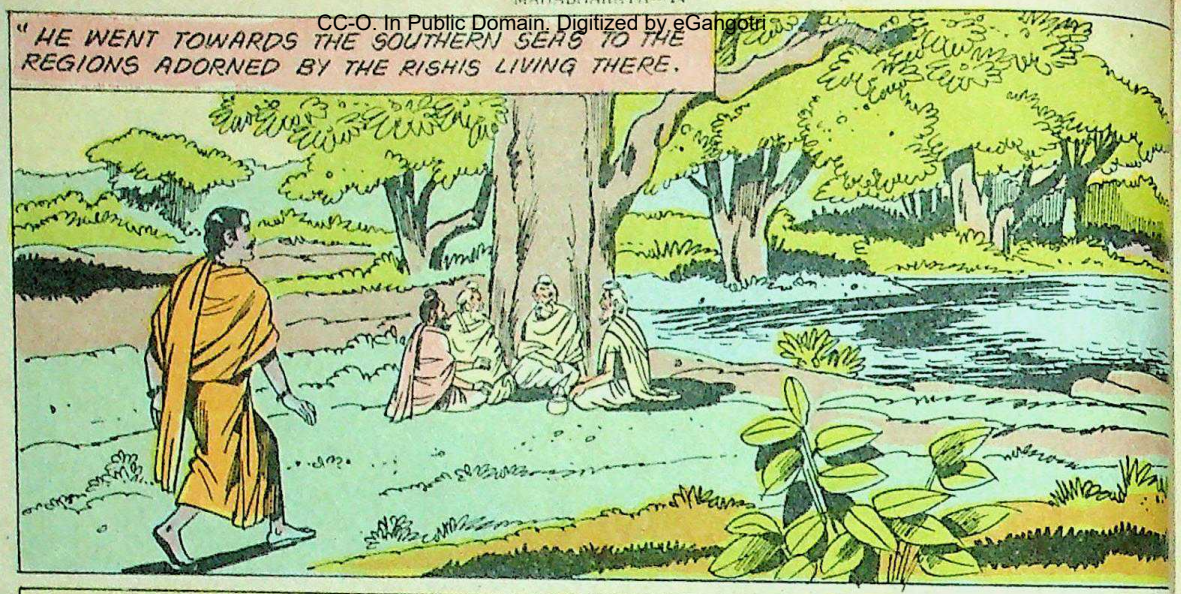

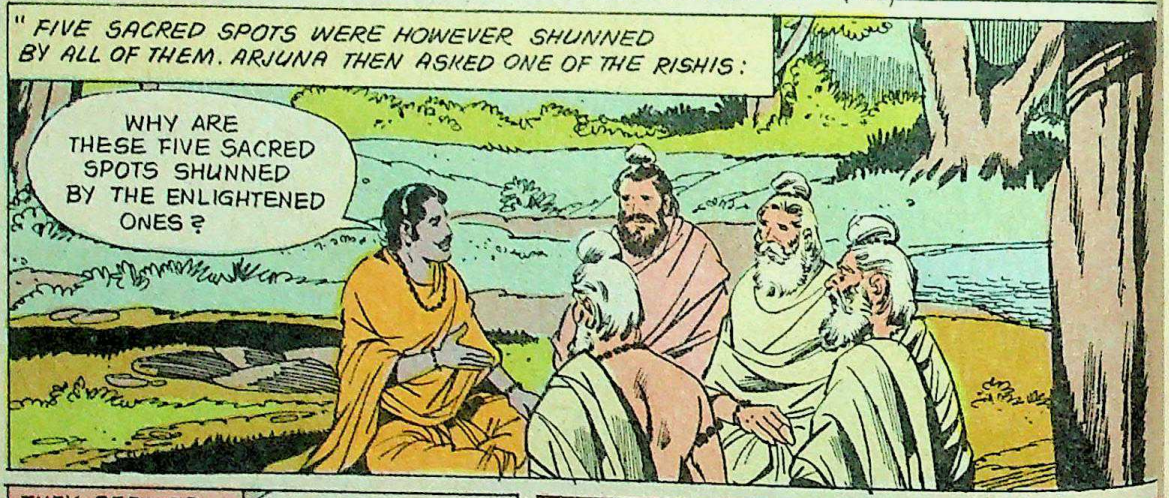

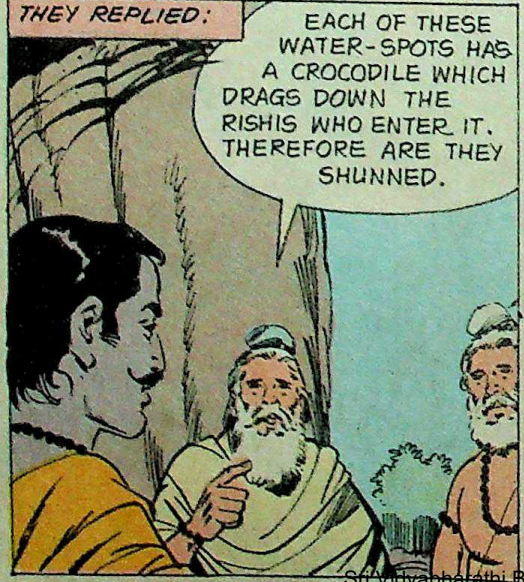

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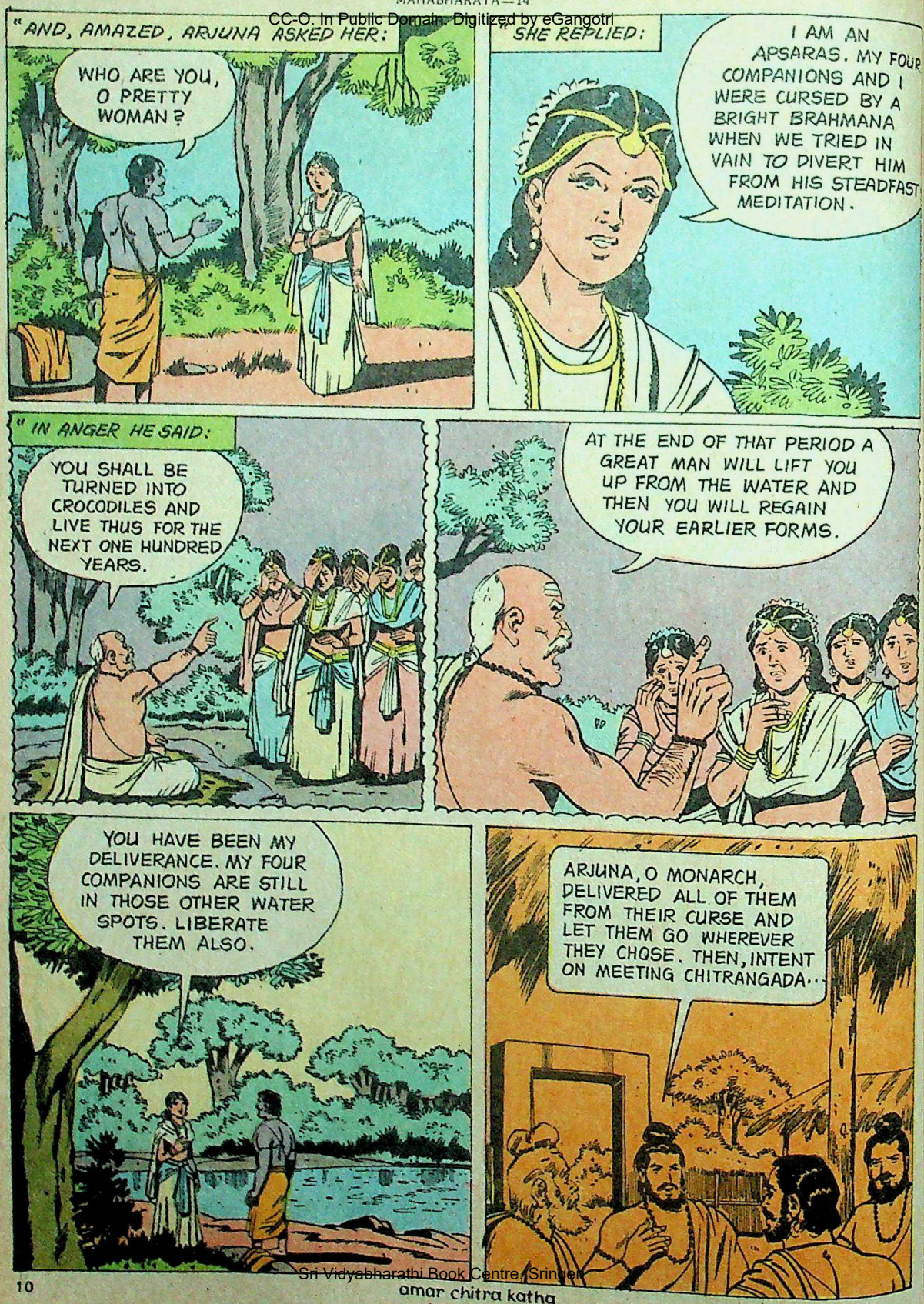

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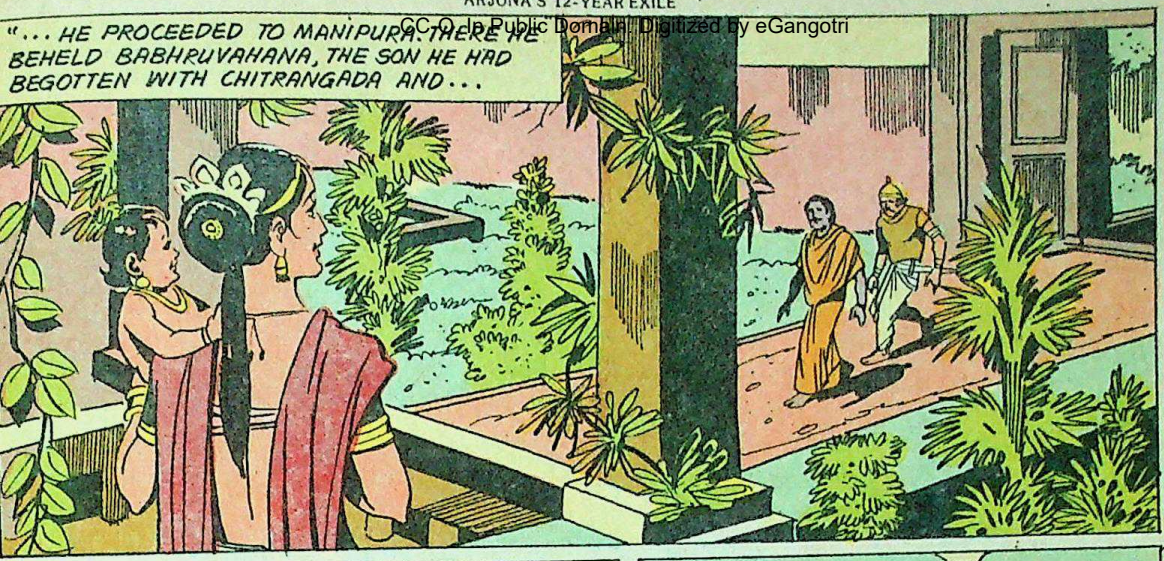
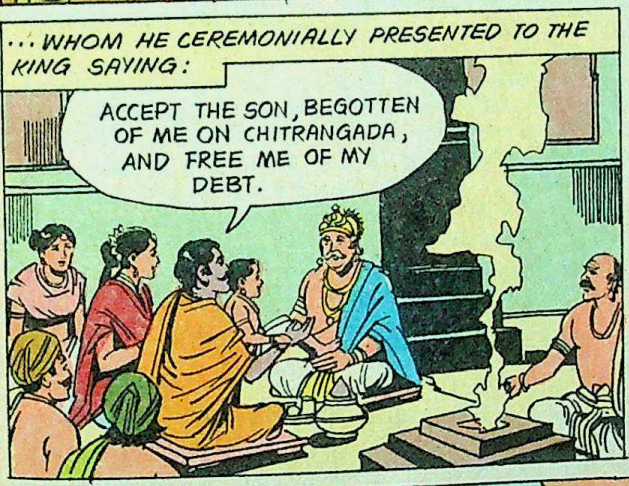
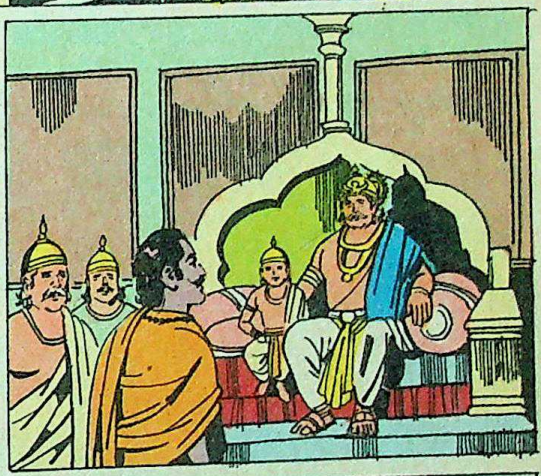
"... HE PROCEEDED TO MANIPURA. THERE HE BEHELD BABHRUVAHANA, THE SON HE HAD BEGOTTEN WITH CHITRANGADA AND...

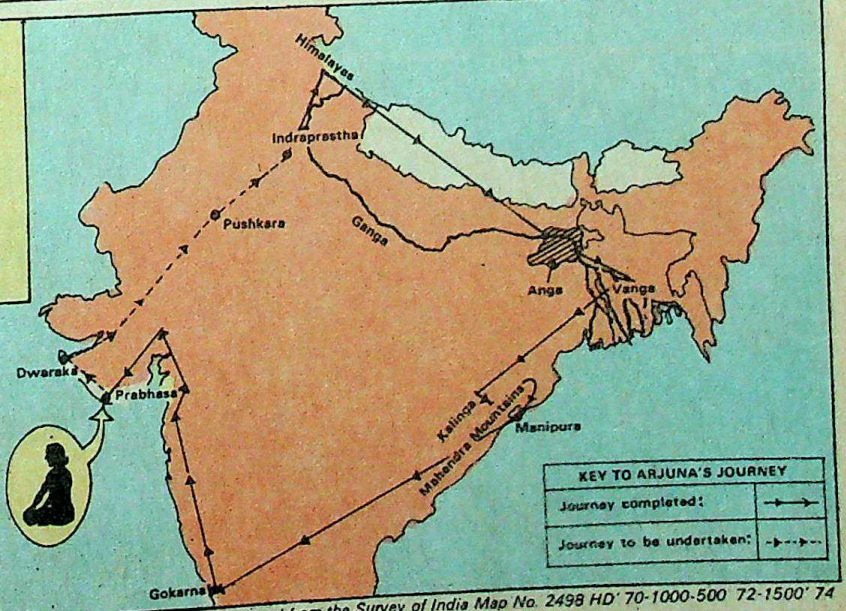


... WHOM HE CEREMONIALLY PRESENTED TO THE KING SAYING:





TAKING LEAVE OF CHITRANGADA, O MONARCH, ARJUNA PROCEEDED TOWARDS GOKARNA. THEN VISITING, ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THE SACRED SPOTS ON THE SHORES OF THE WESTERN OCEAN, HE REACHED PRABHASA.



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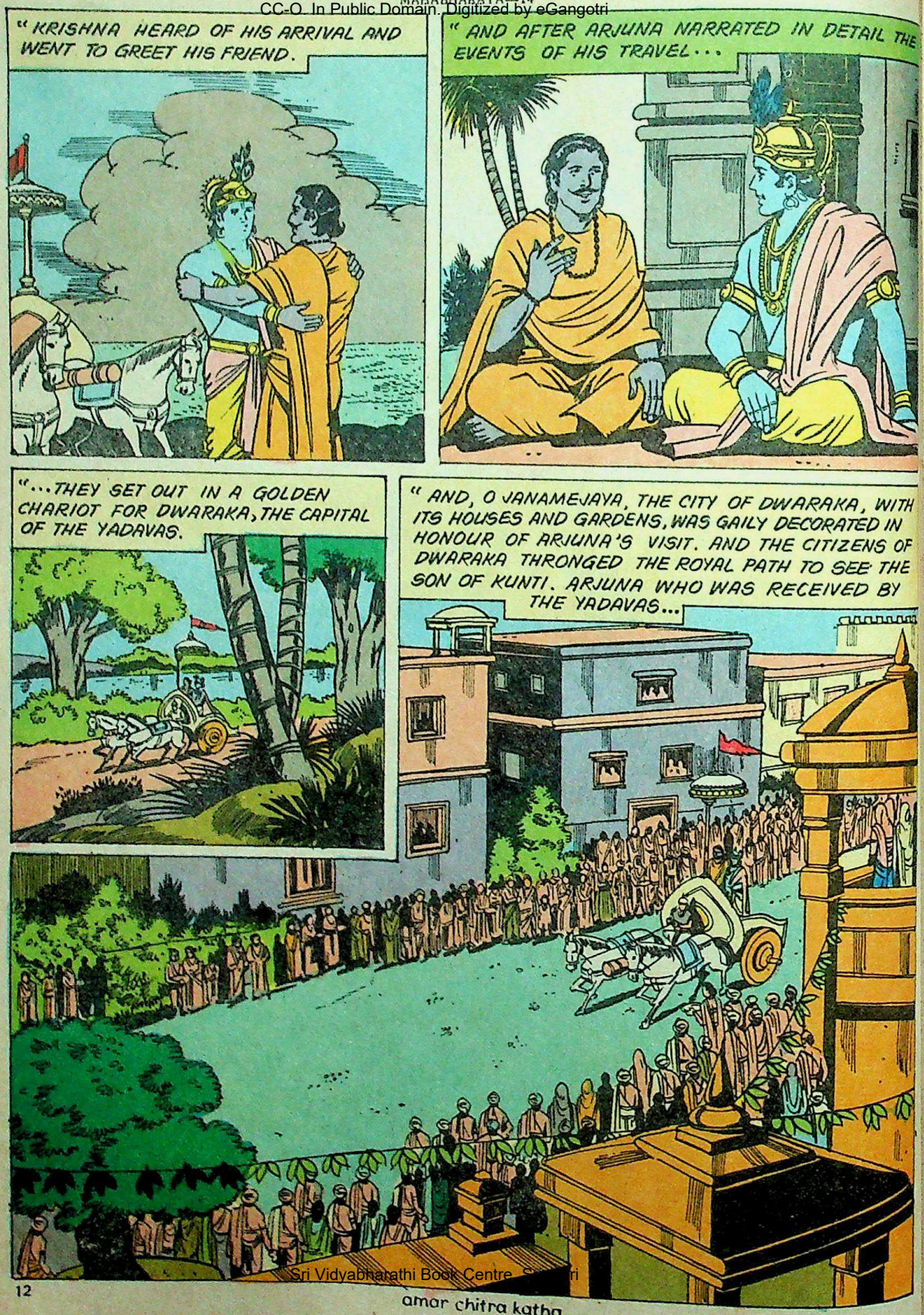

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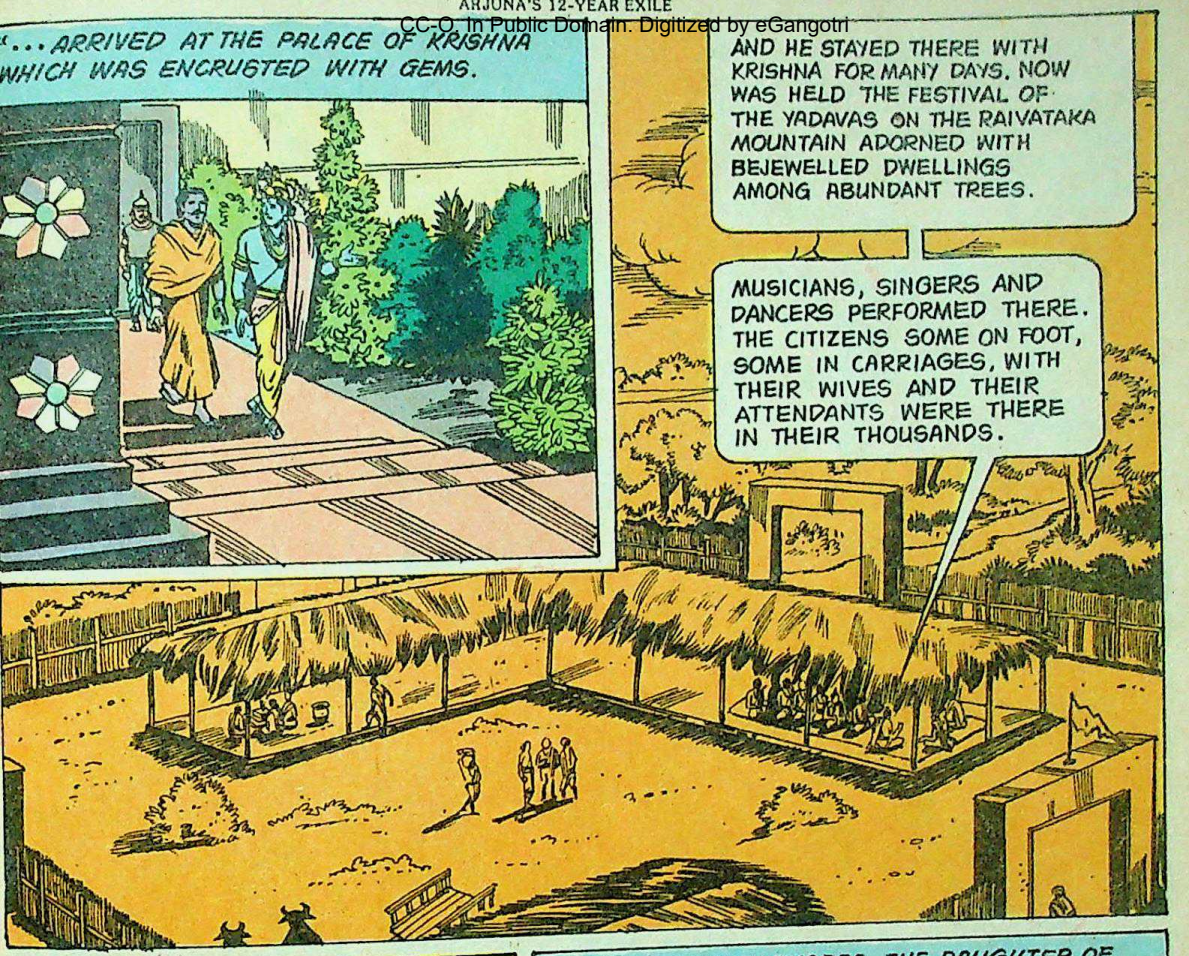

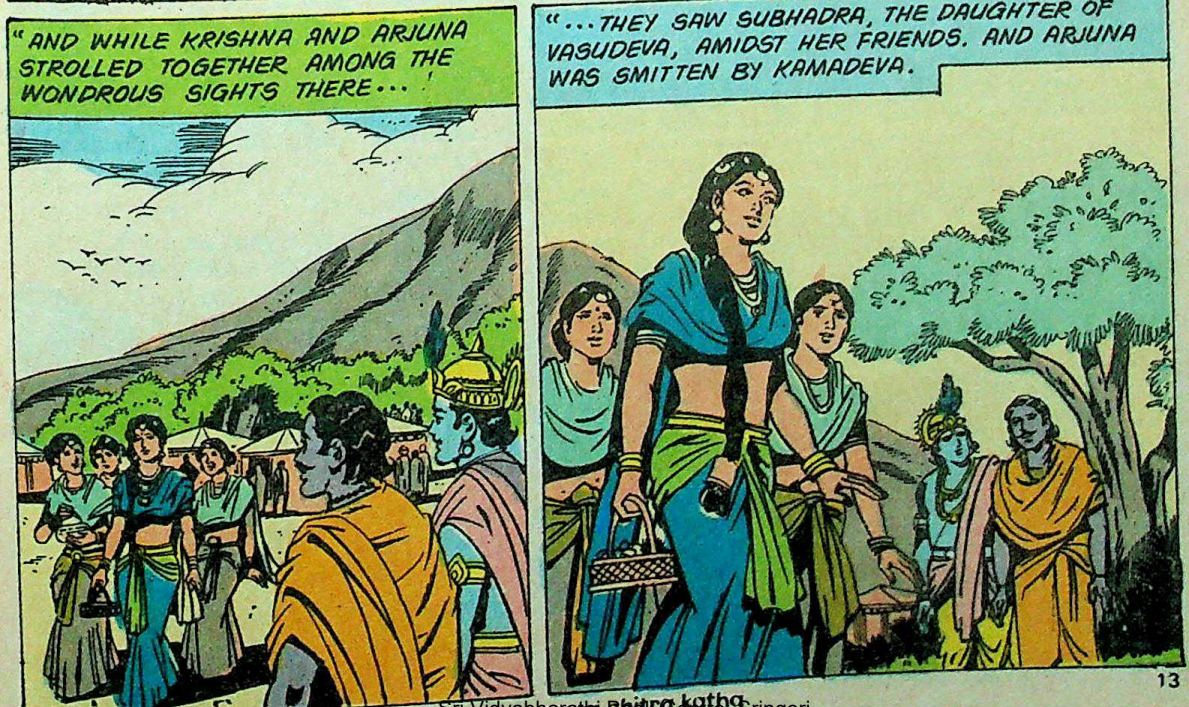

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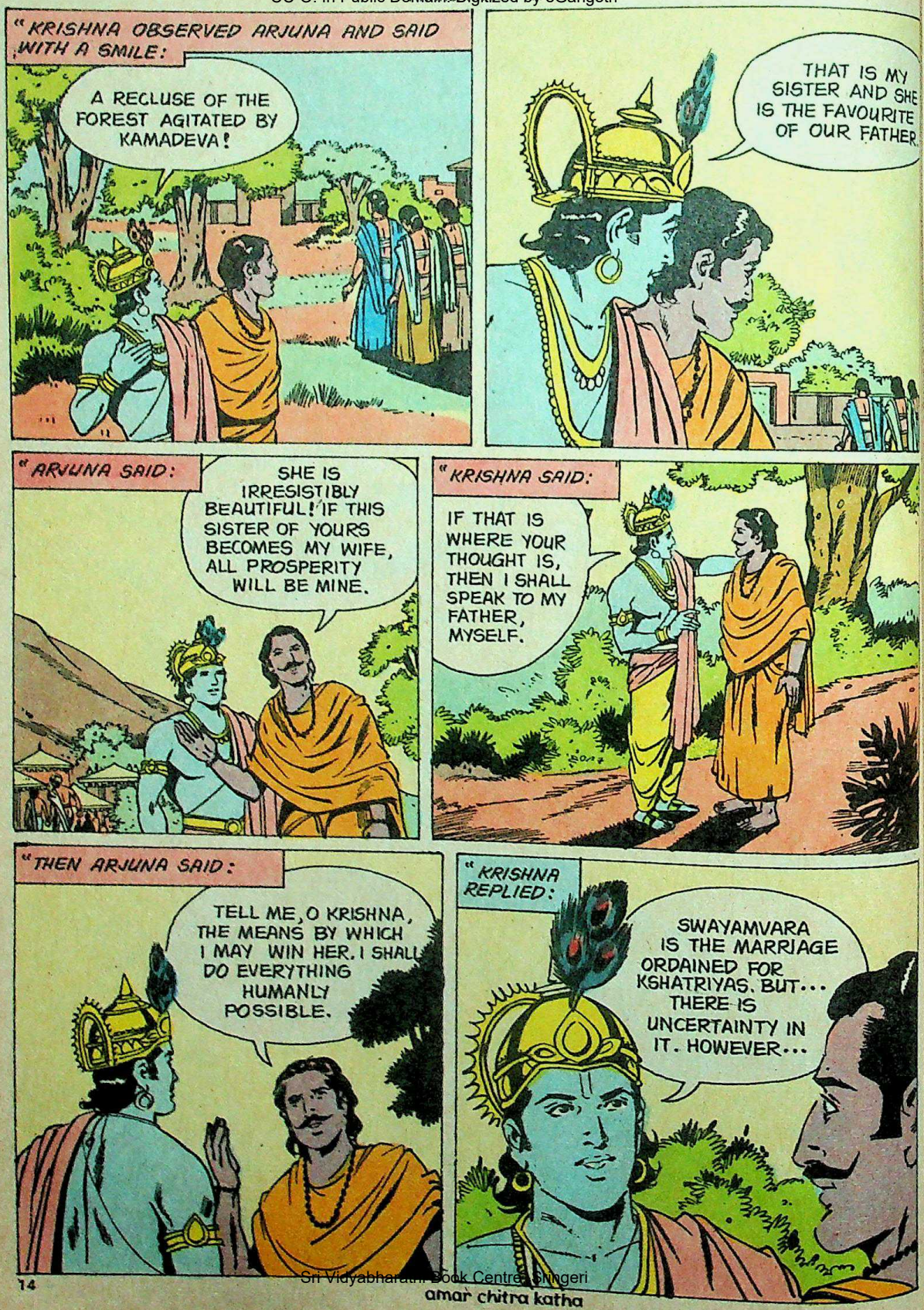

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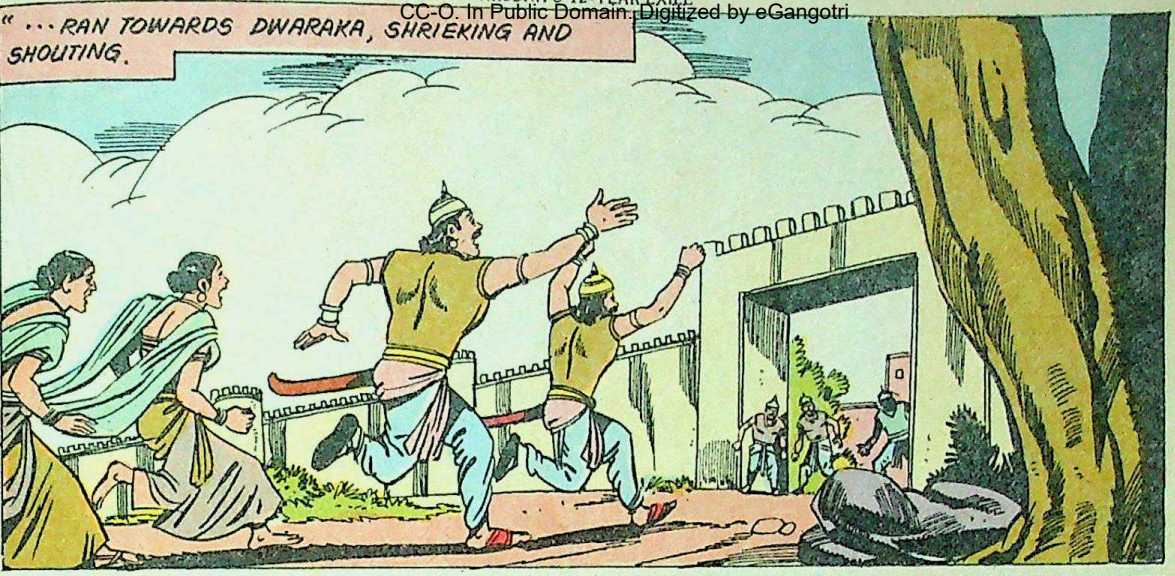

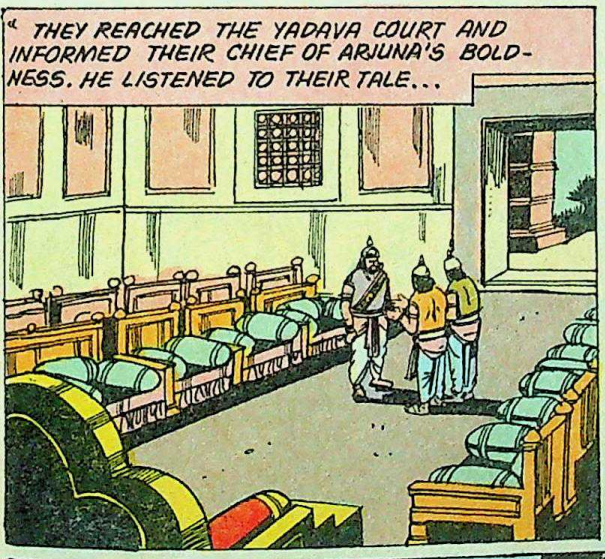

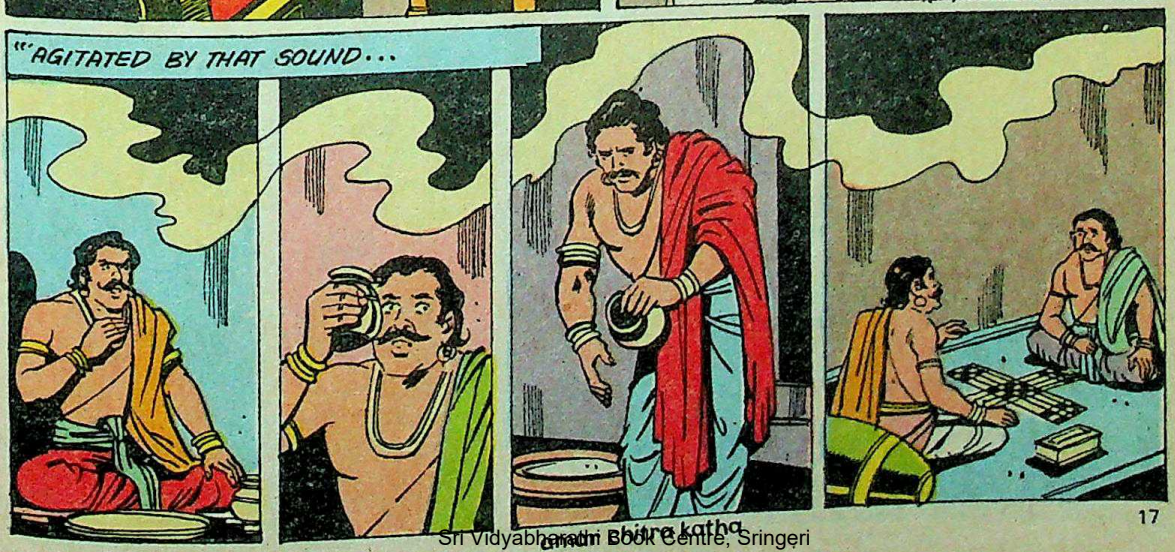

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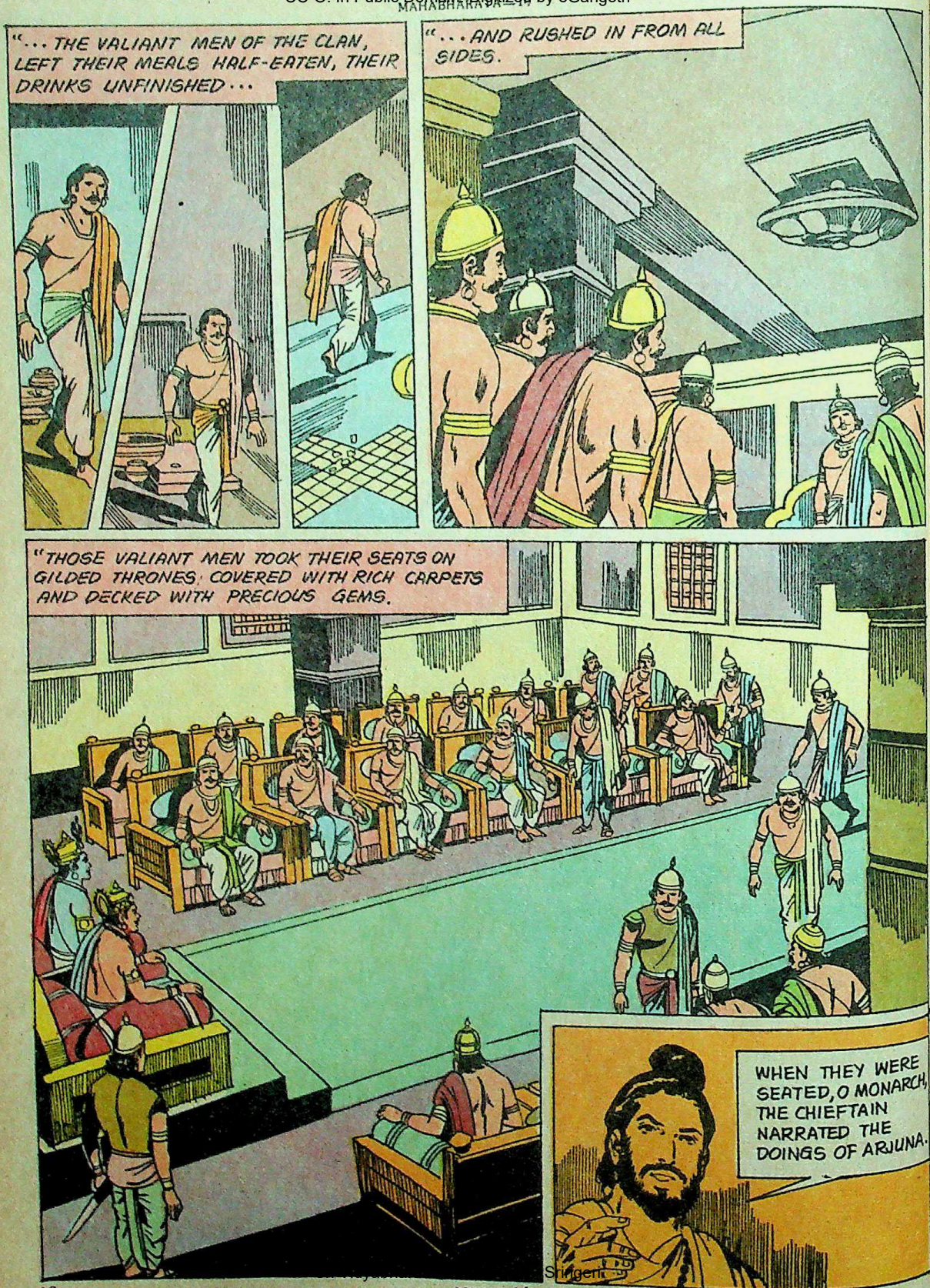

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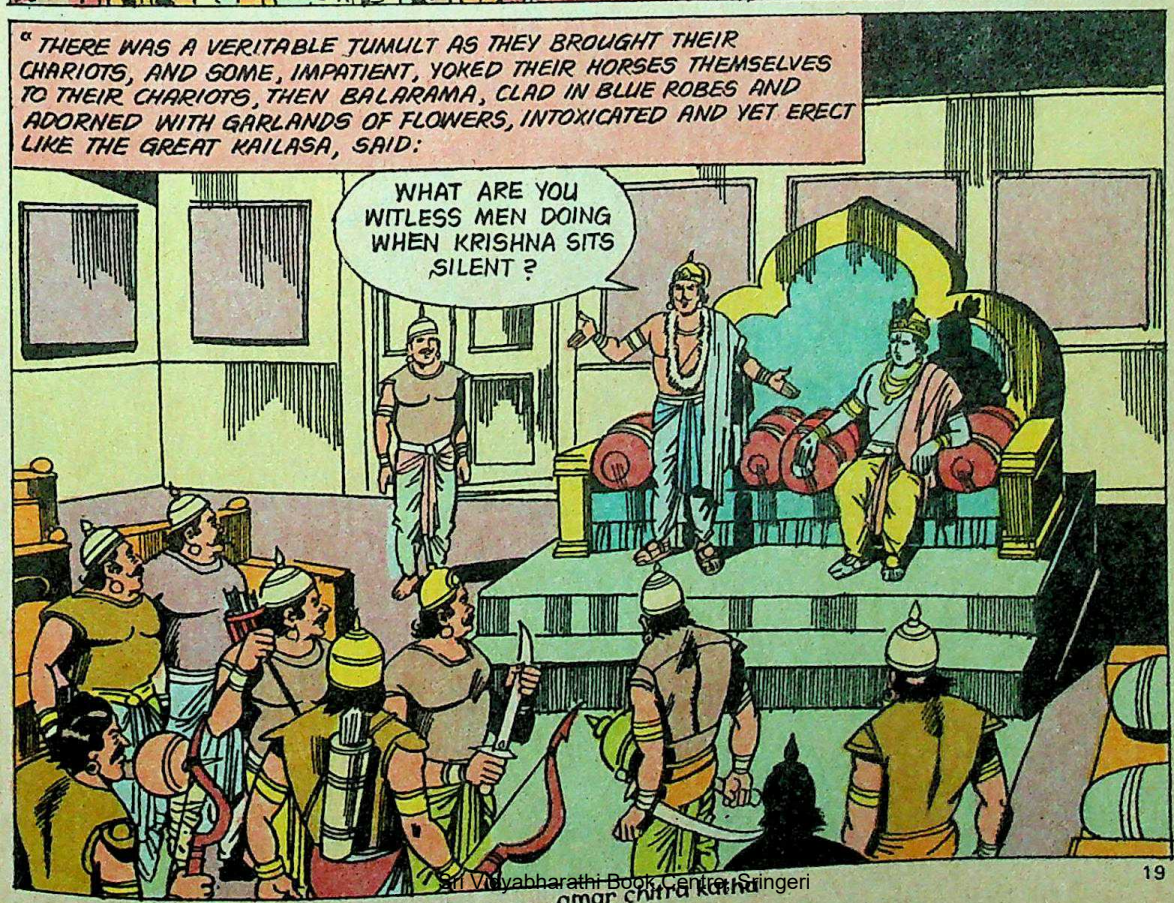

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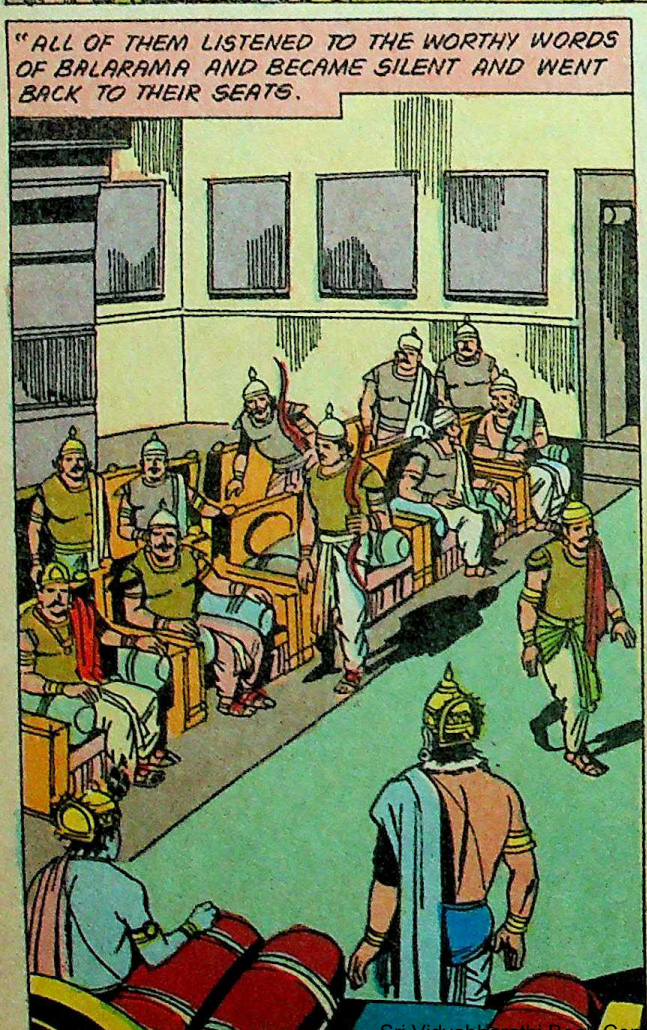

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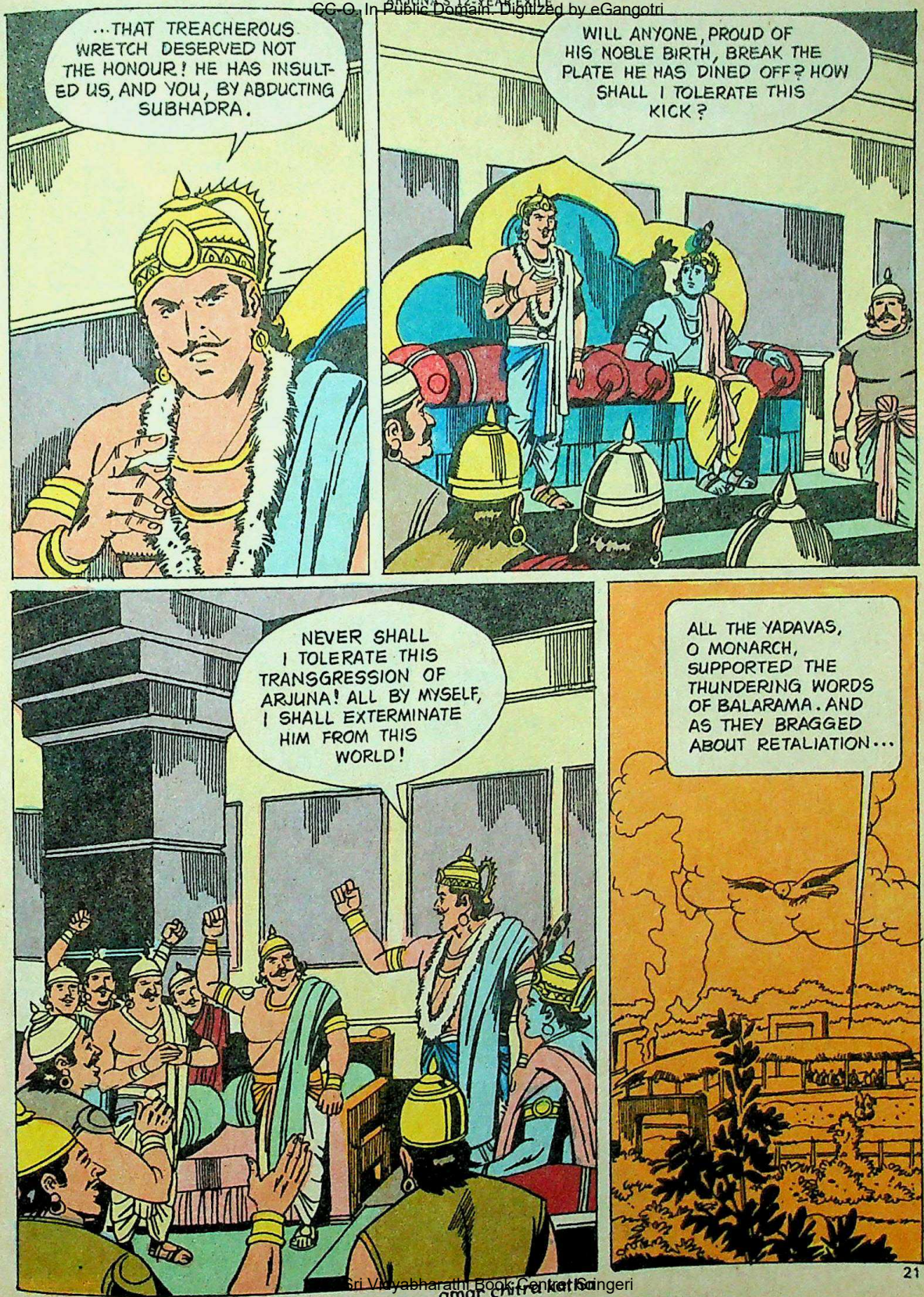

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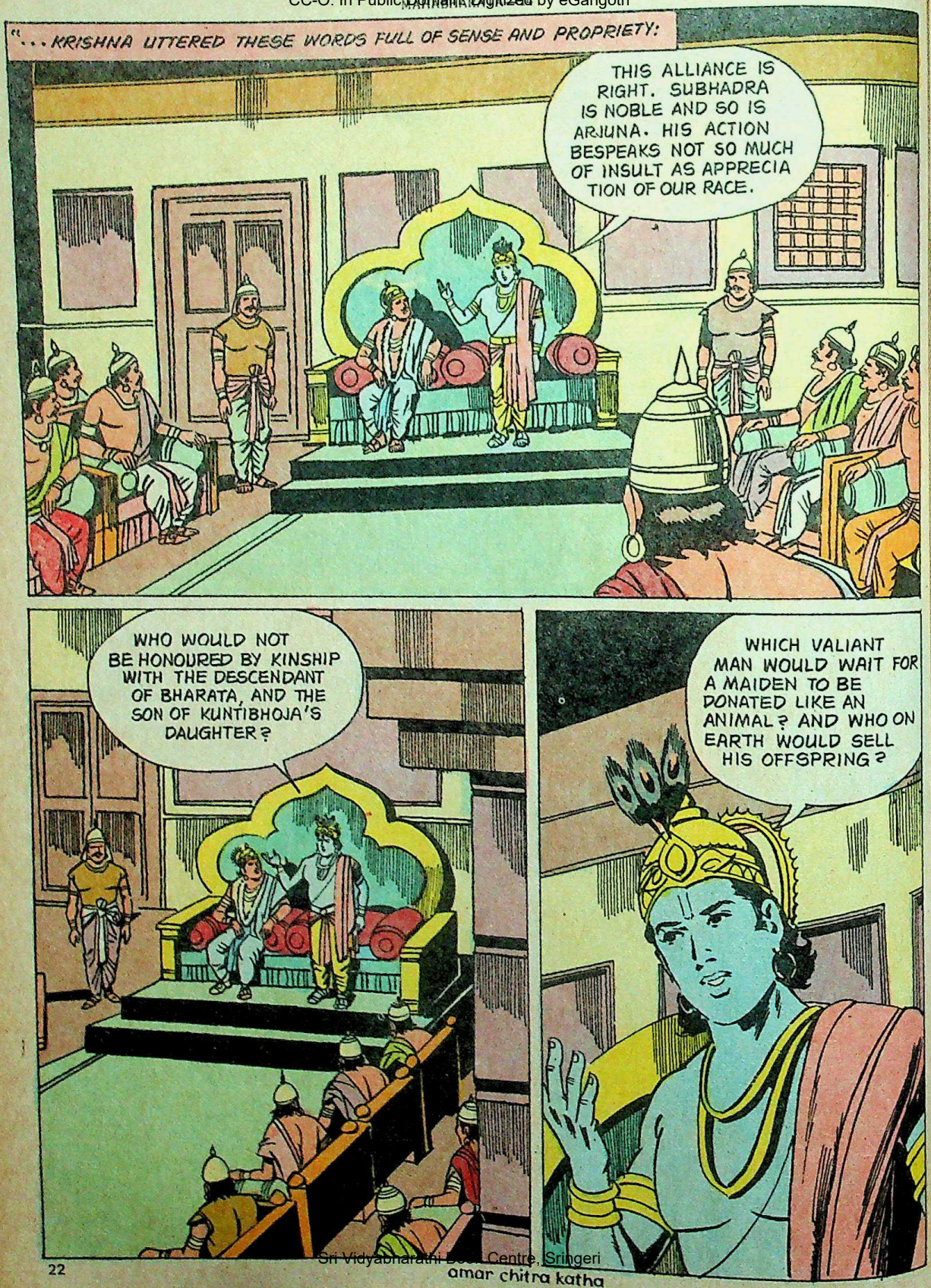

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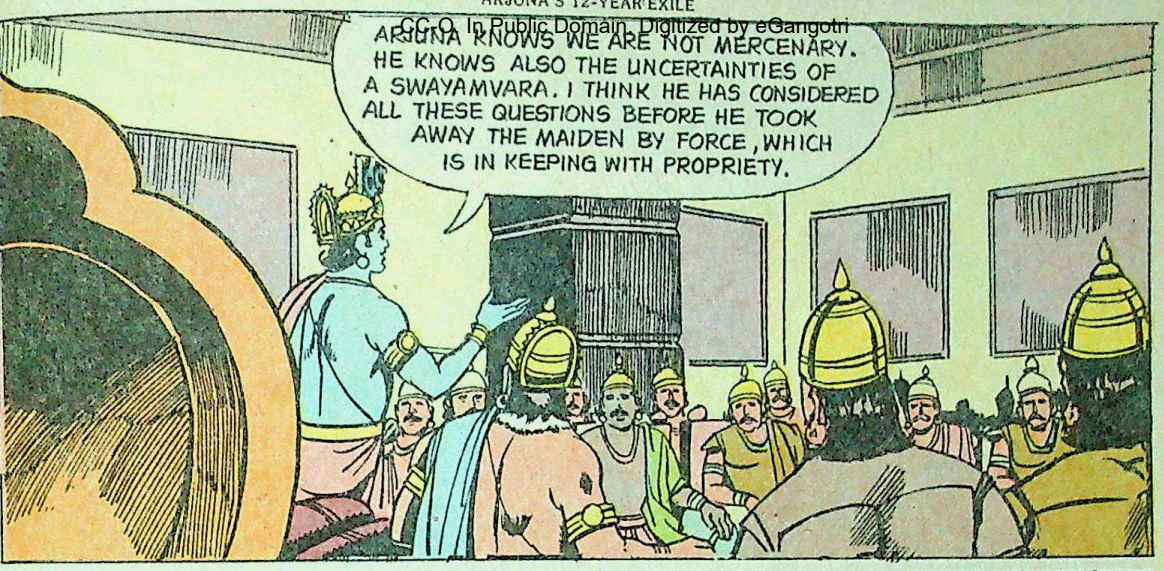

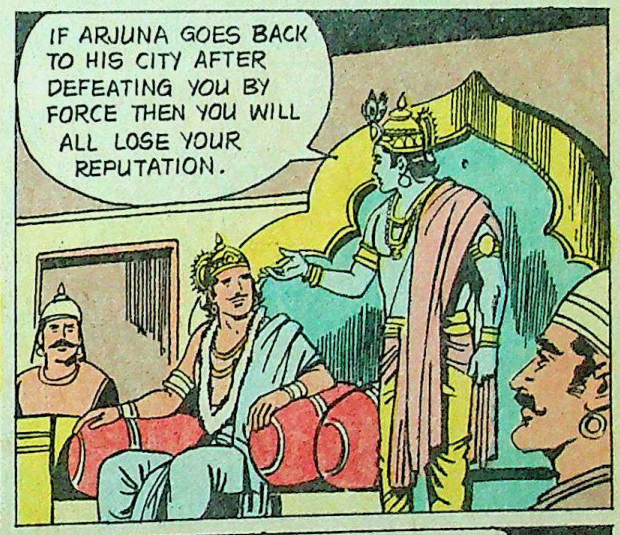

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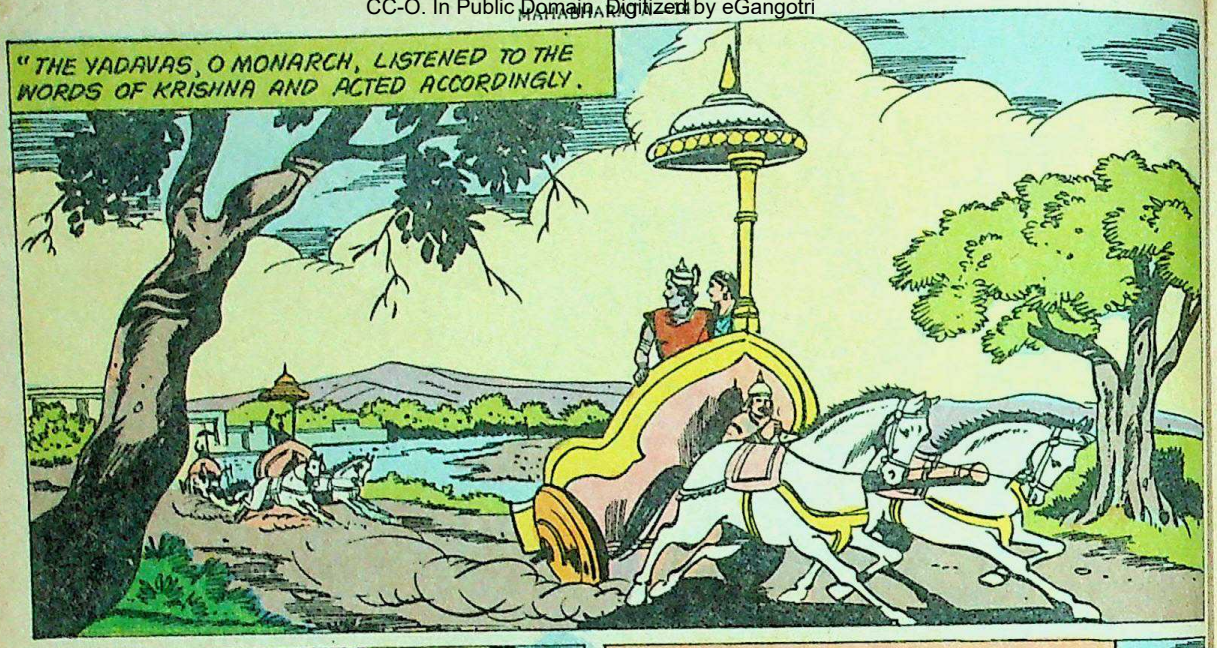

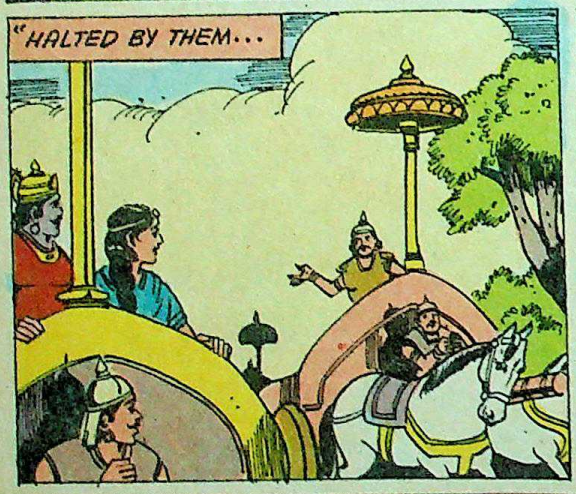

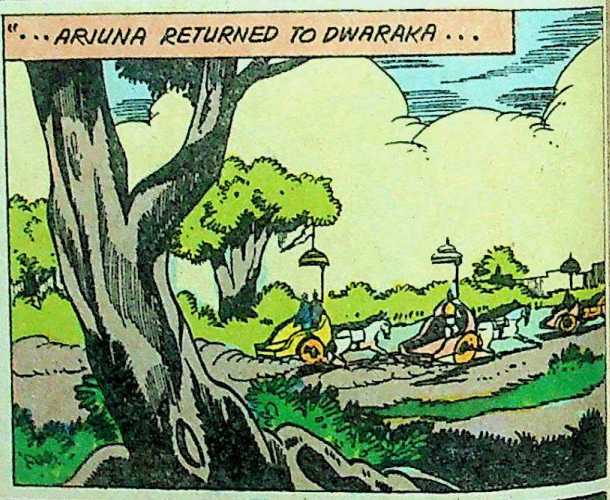

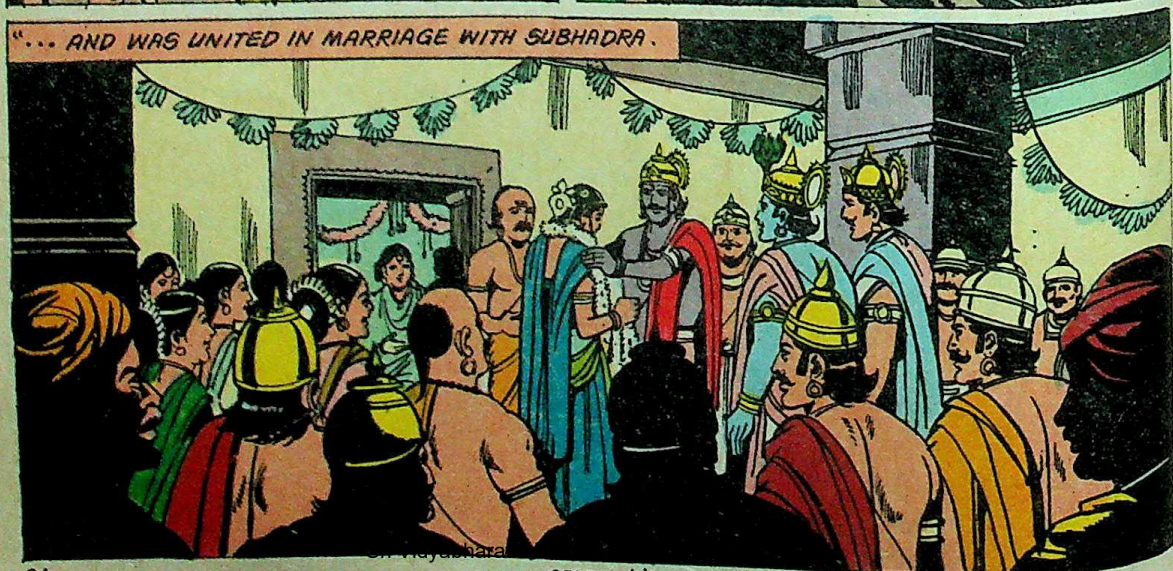

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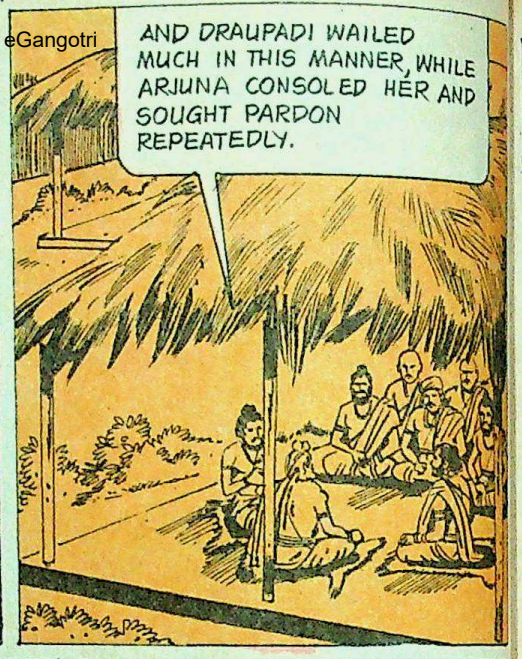

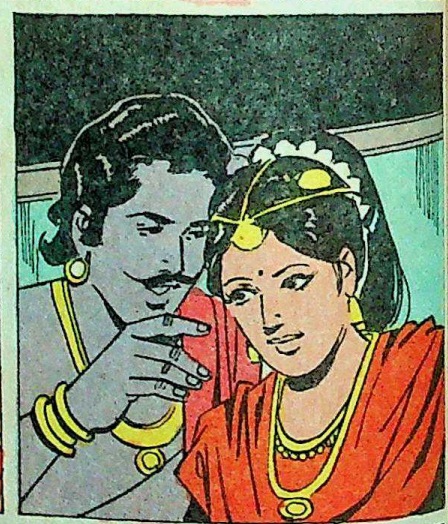

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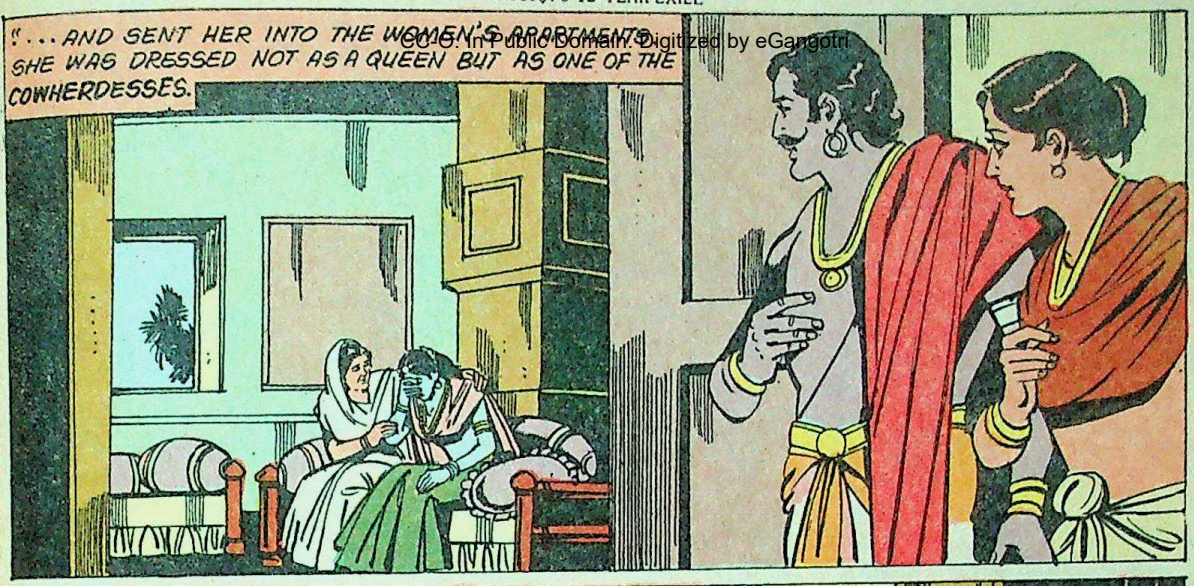

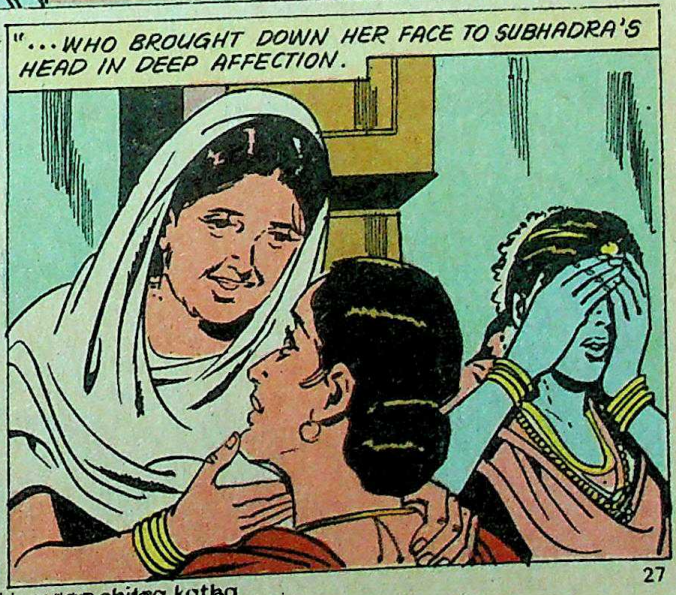

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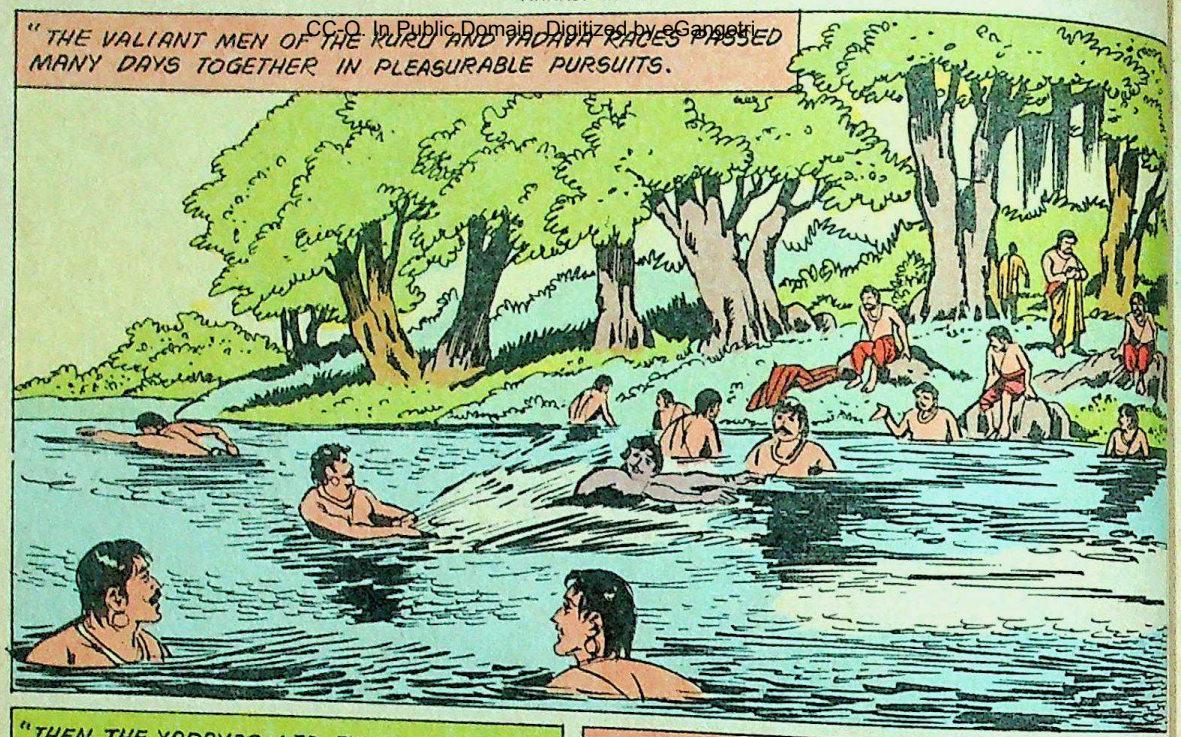

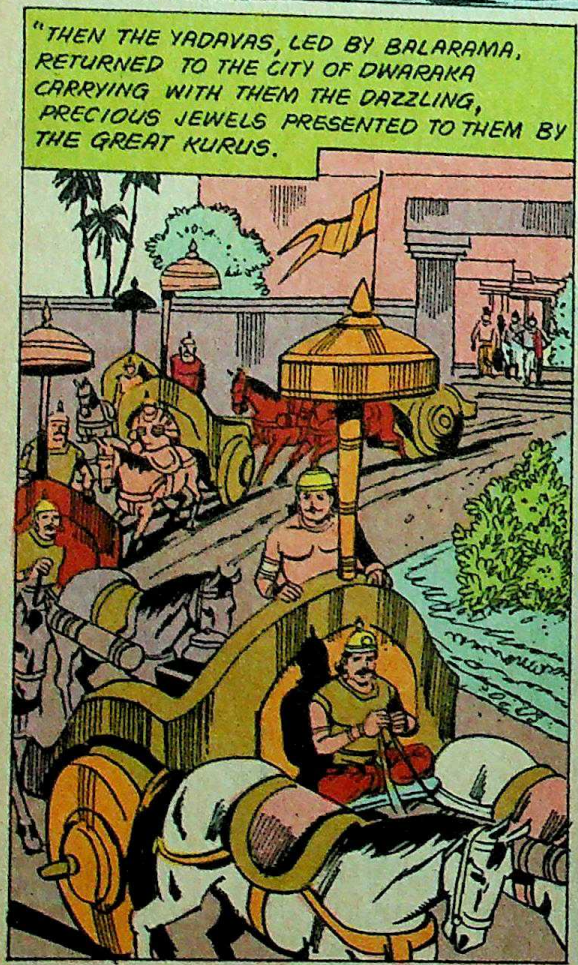

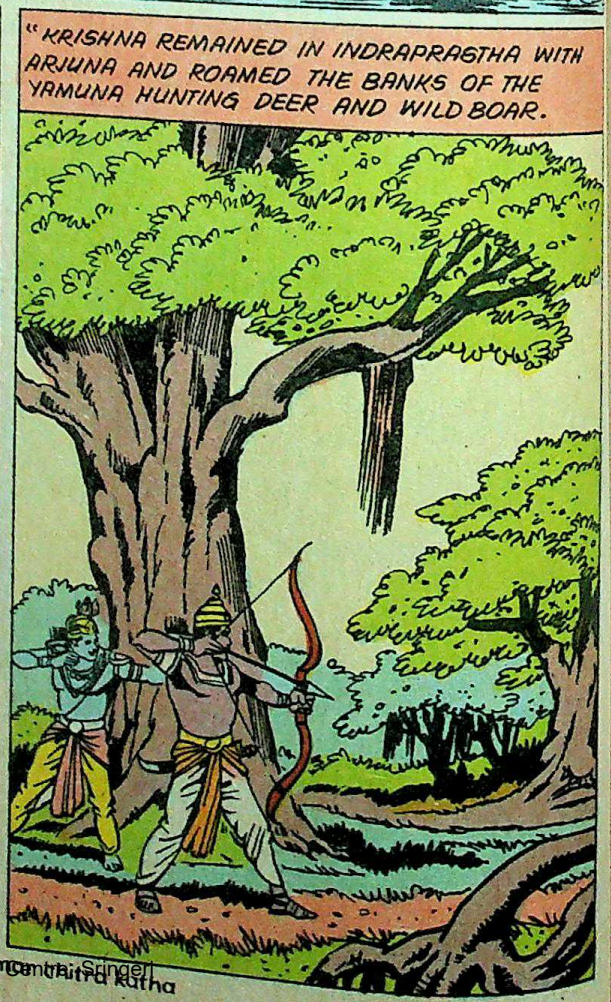

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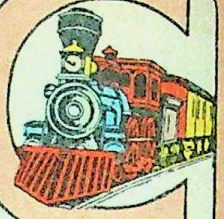

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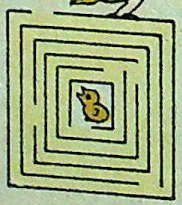

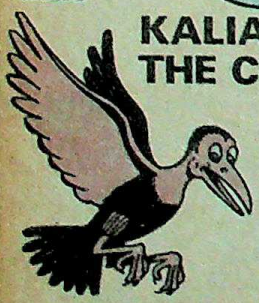

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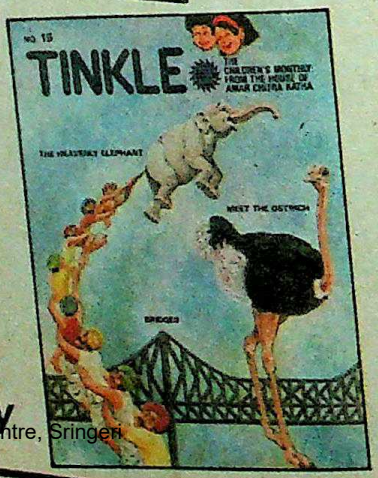

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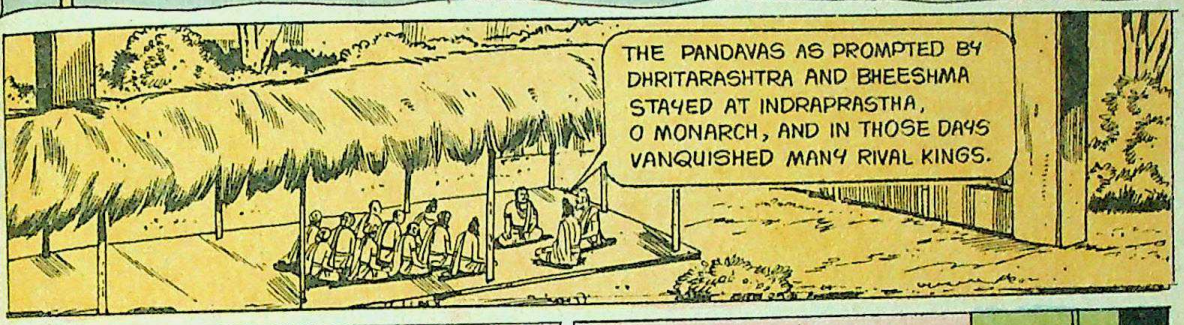

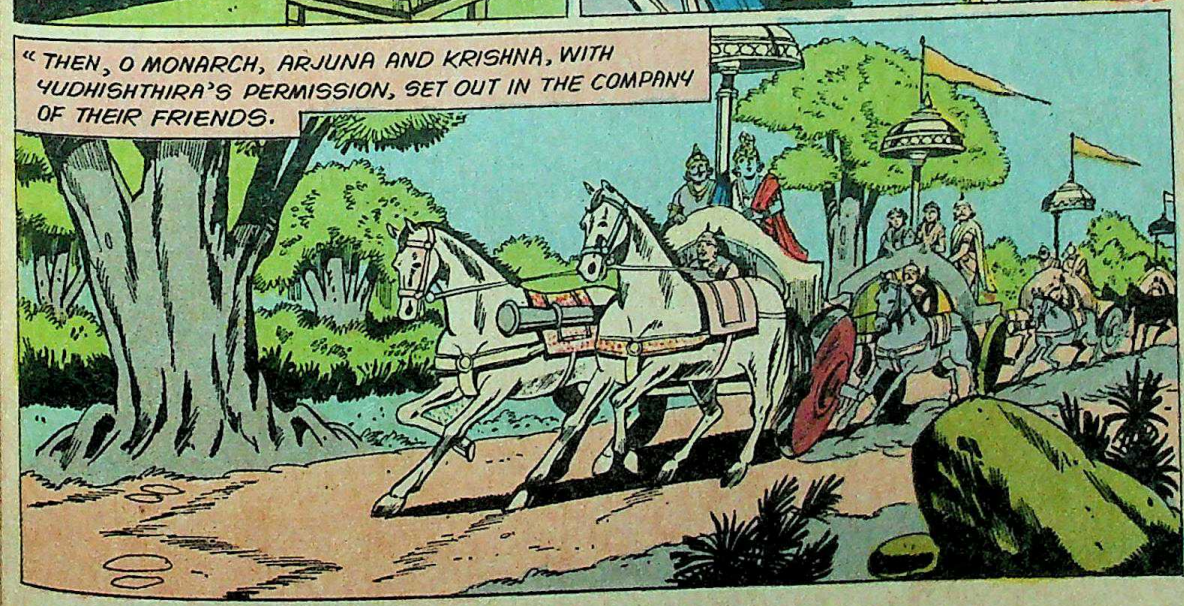

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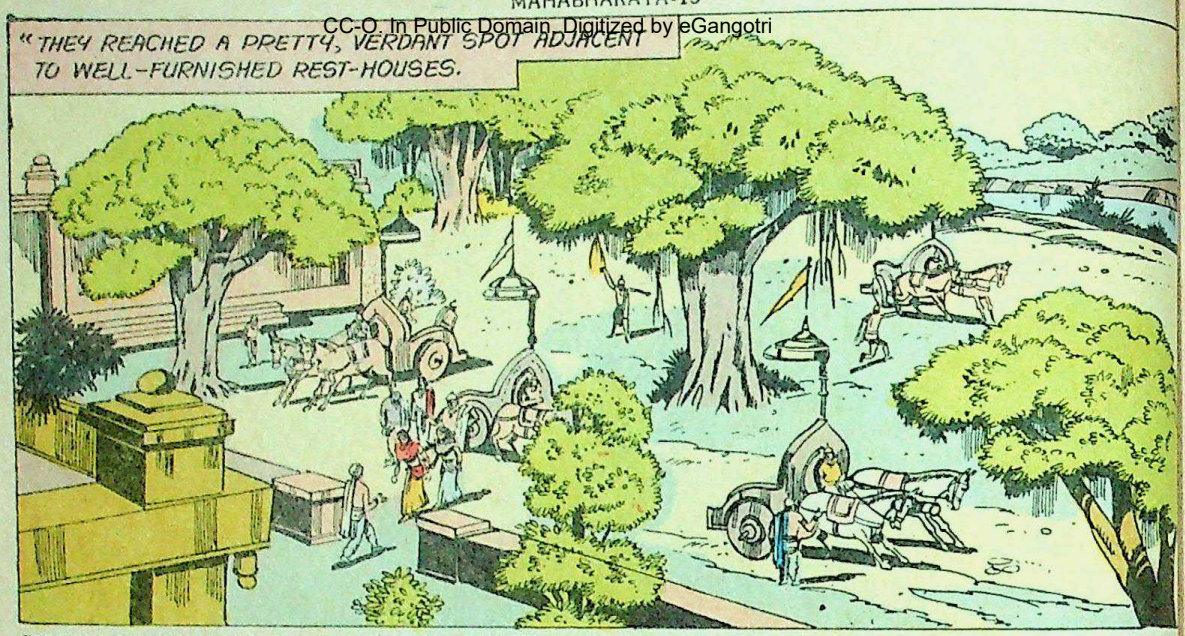

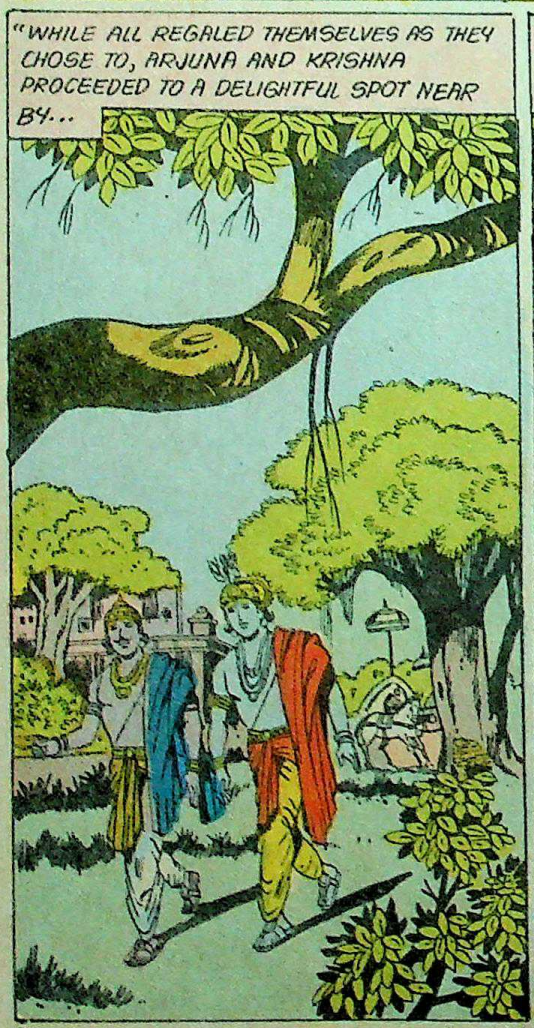

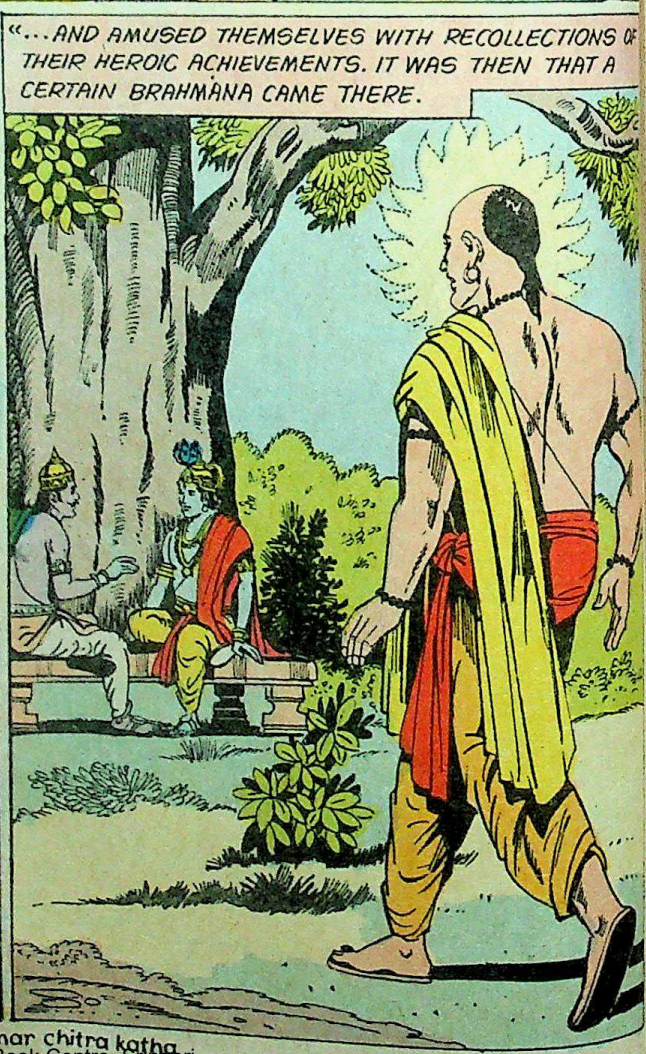

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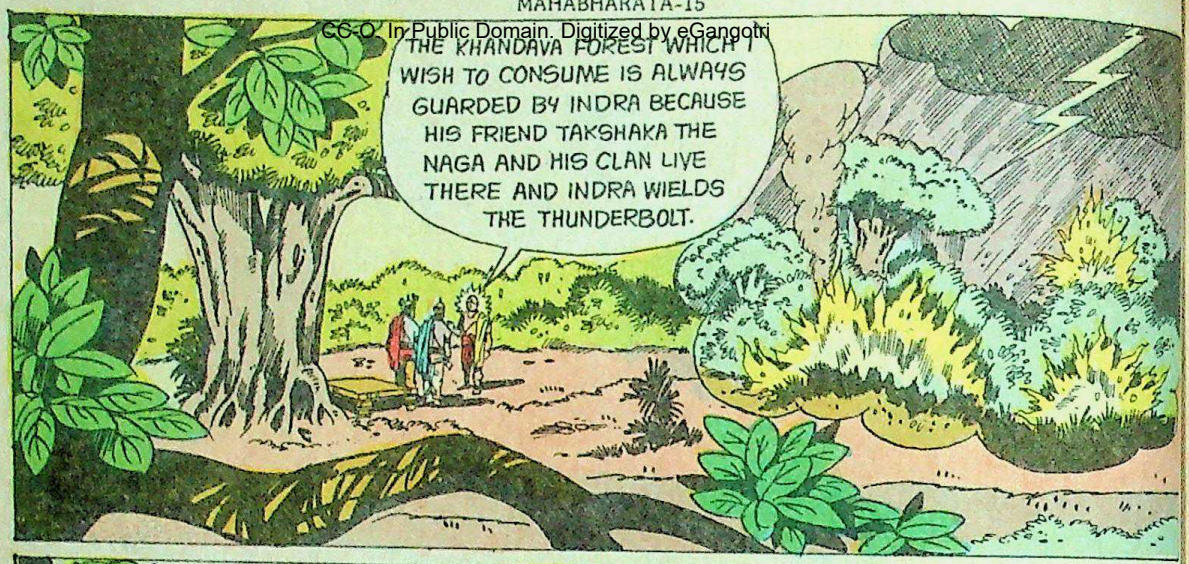

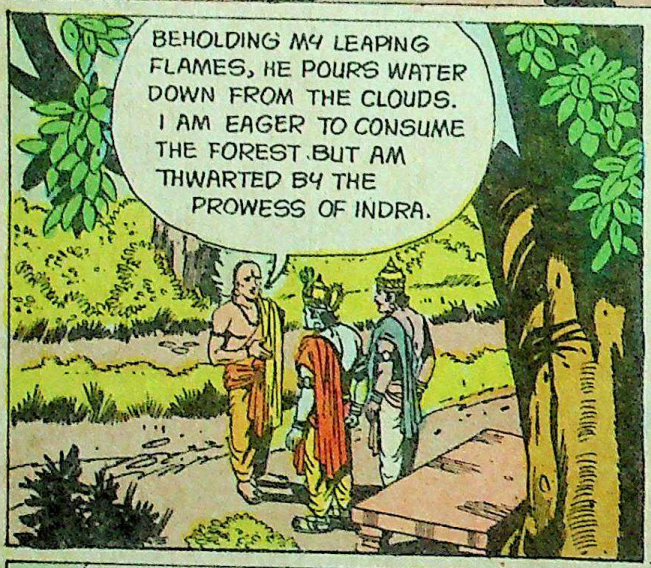

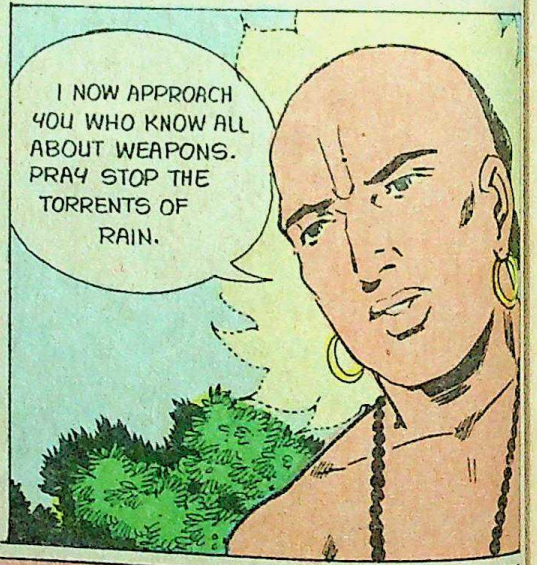

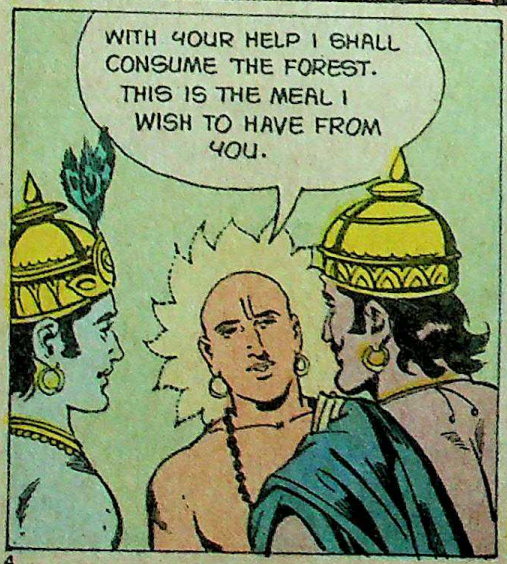

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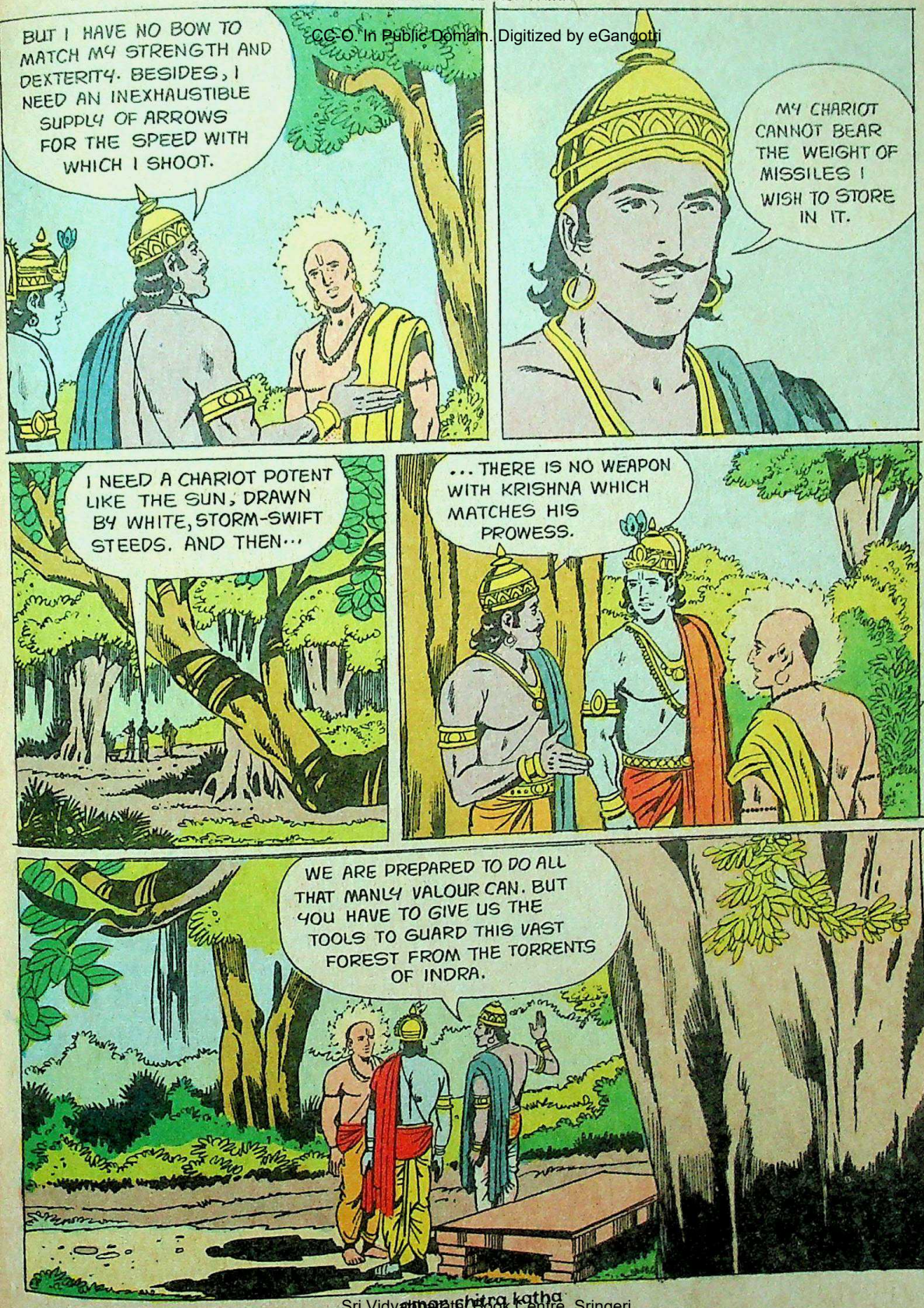

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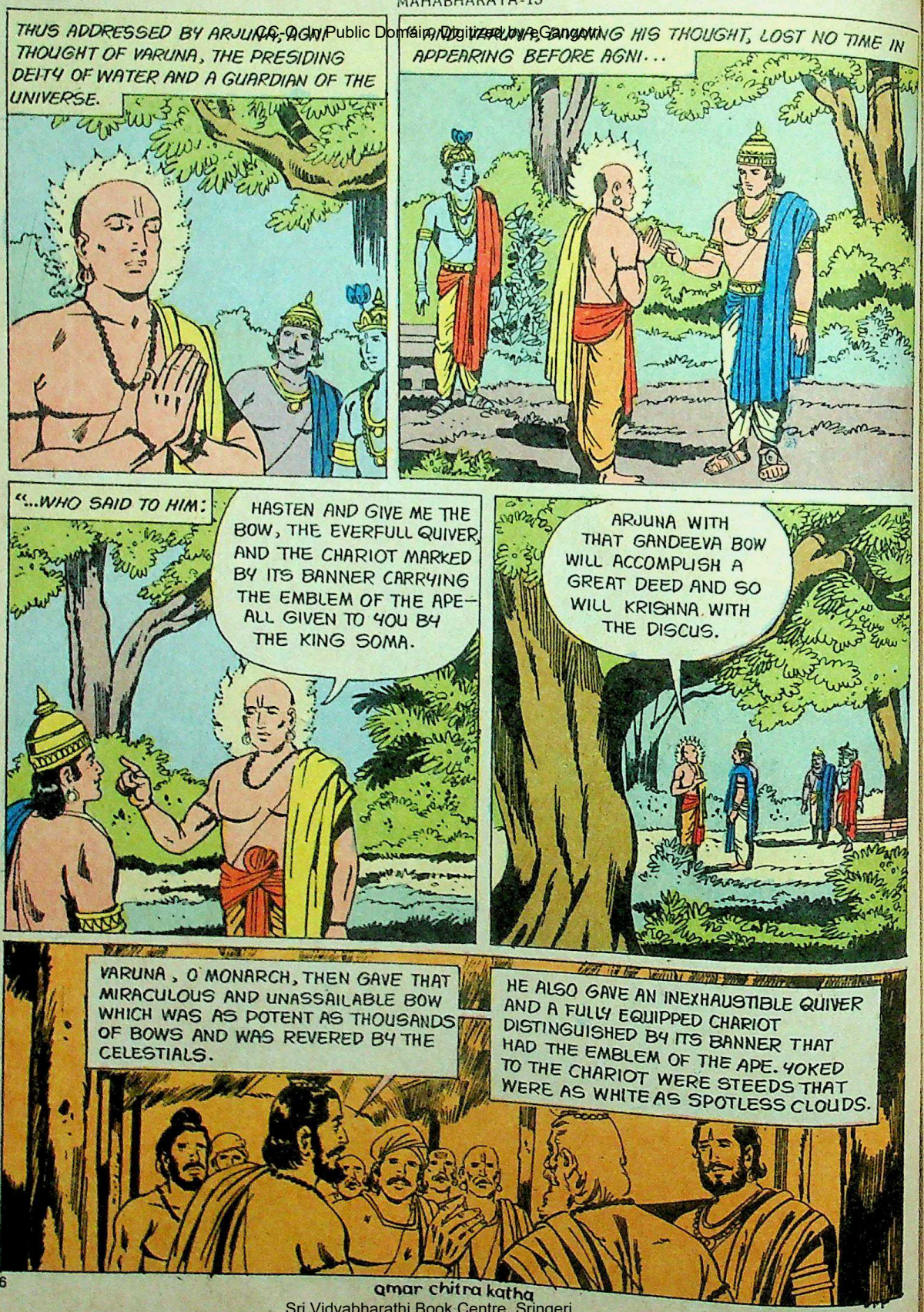

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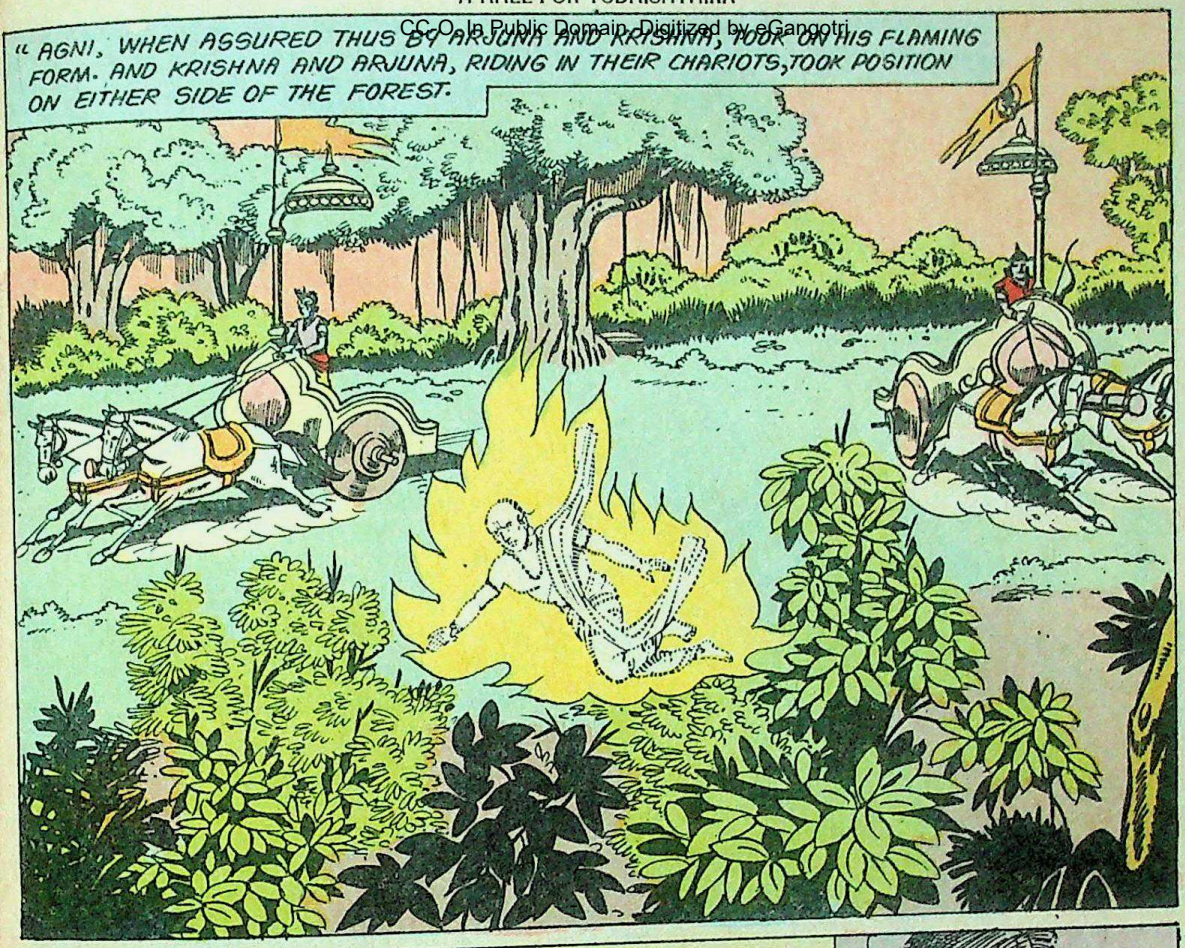

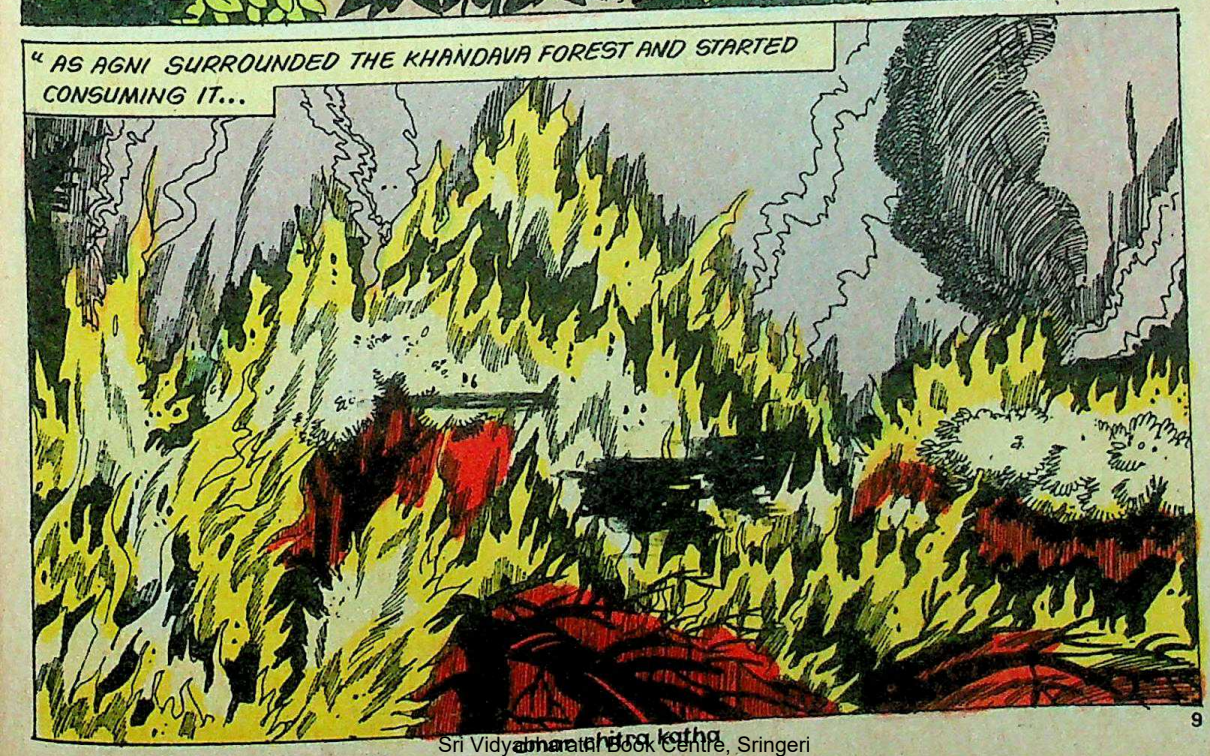

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"... THE WATER-SPOTS BEGAN TO BOIL AND THE LEAPING FLAMES ROSE UP TO THE SKY...

"... STRIKING FEAR INTO THE HEARTS OF THE CELESTIALS.

"THEN THOSE IN THE REALMS ABOVE WENT TO INDRA AND SAID:

O LORD, WHY IS AGNI BURNING UP ALL THOSE CREATURES? IS THE WORLD NEARING ITS DAY OF DOOM?

"WHEN INDRA HEARD THIS AND BEHELD FOR HIMSELF THE EVENT, O MONARCH, HE COVERED THE SKIES WITH MULTITUDINOUS CLOUDS. AND THOSE CLOUDS AMASSED AND COMMANDED BY INDRA...

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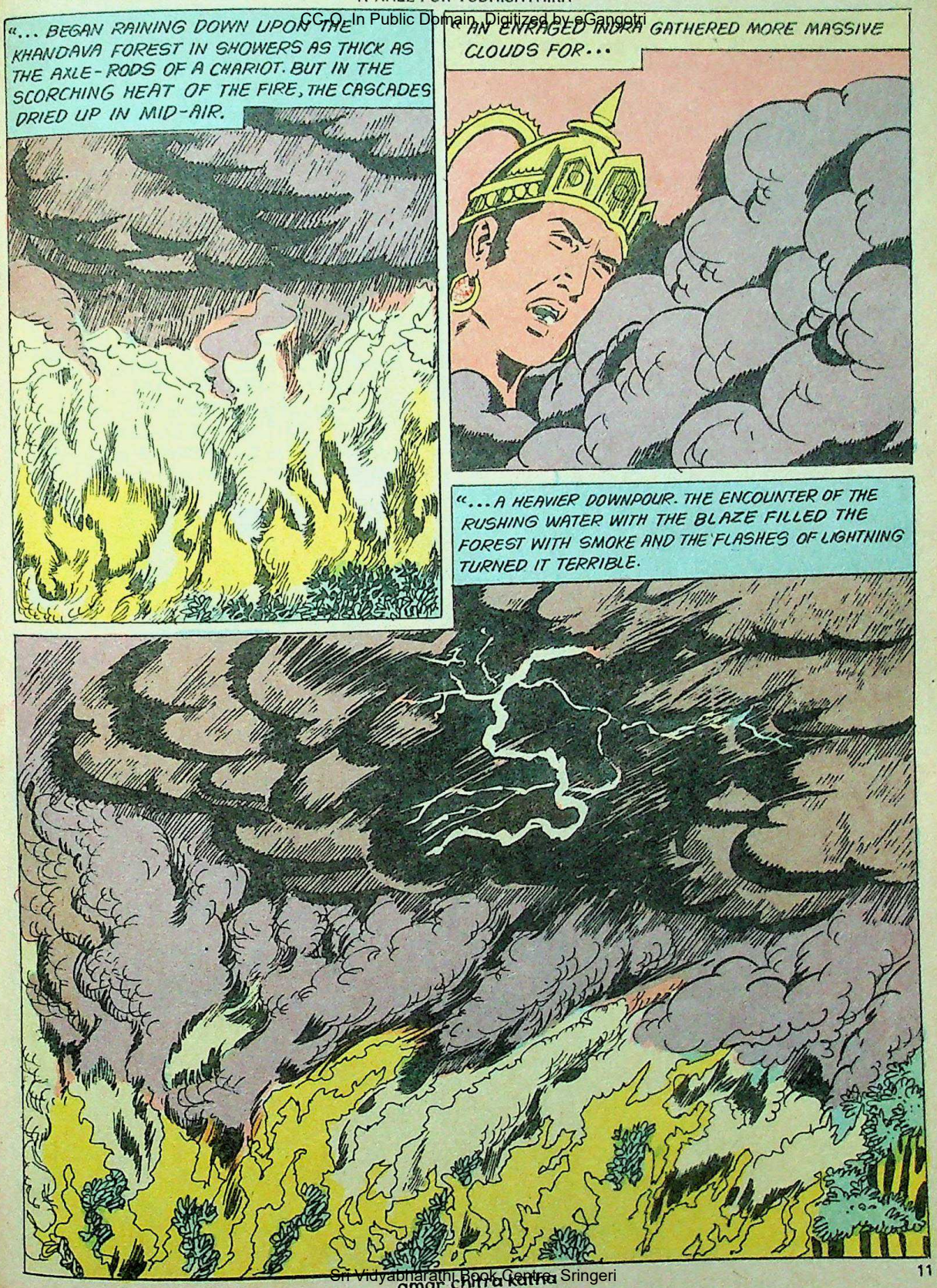

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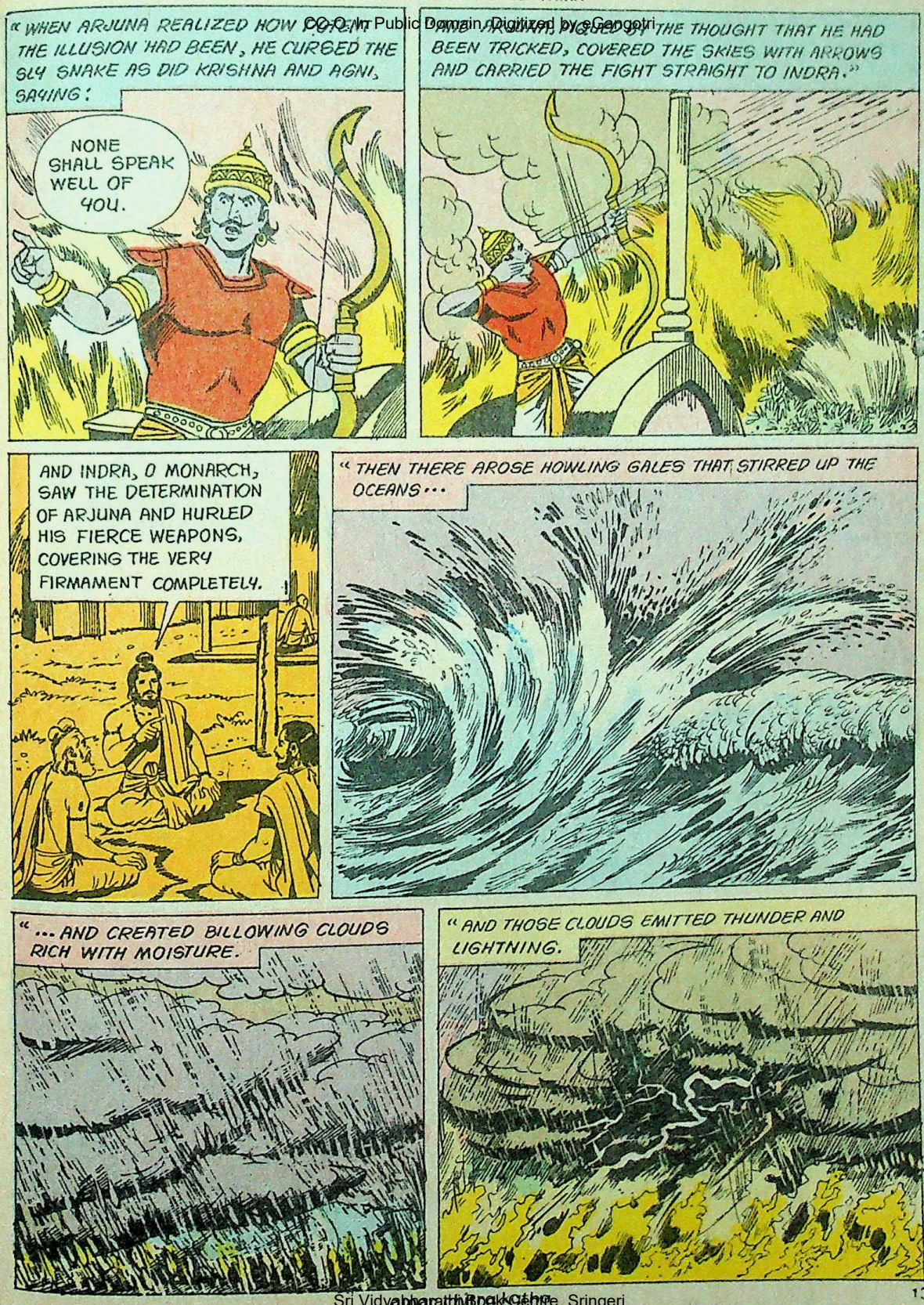

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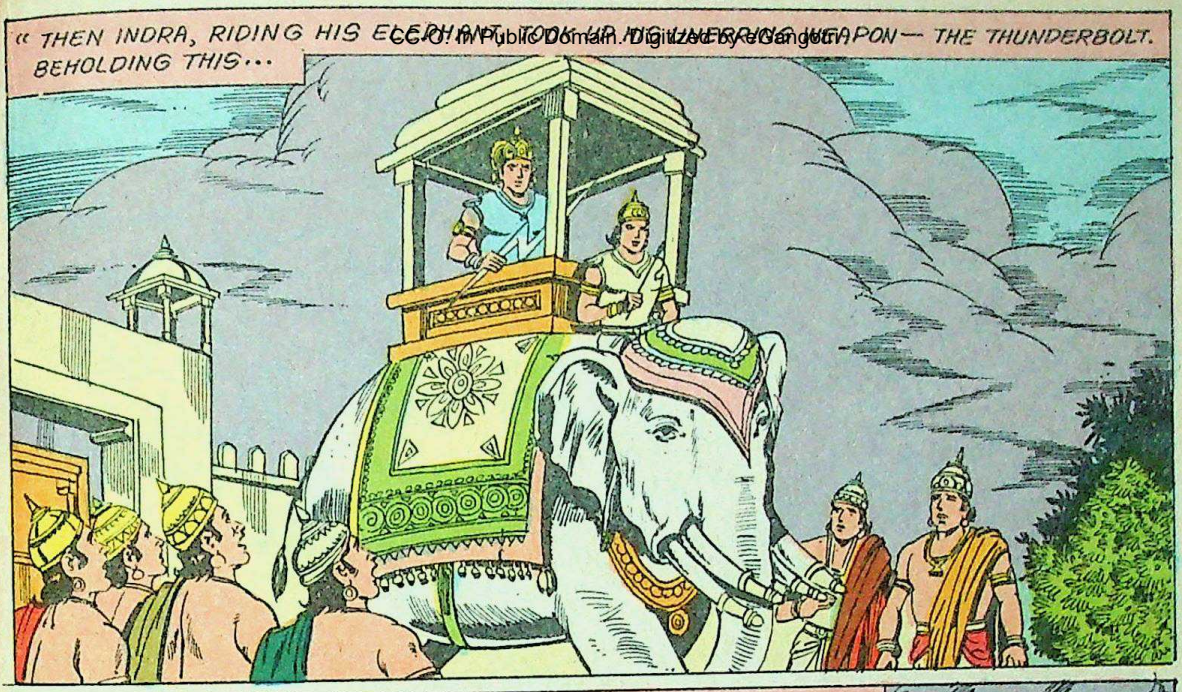

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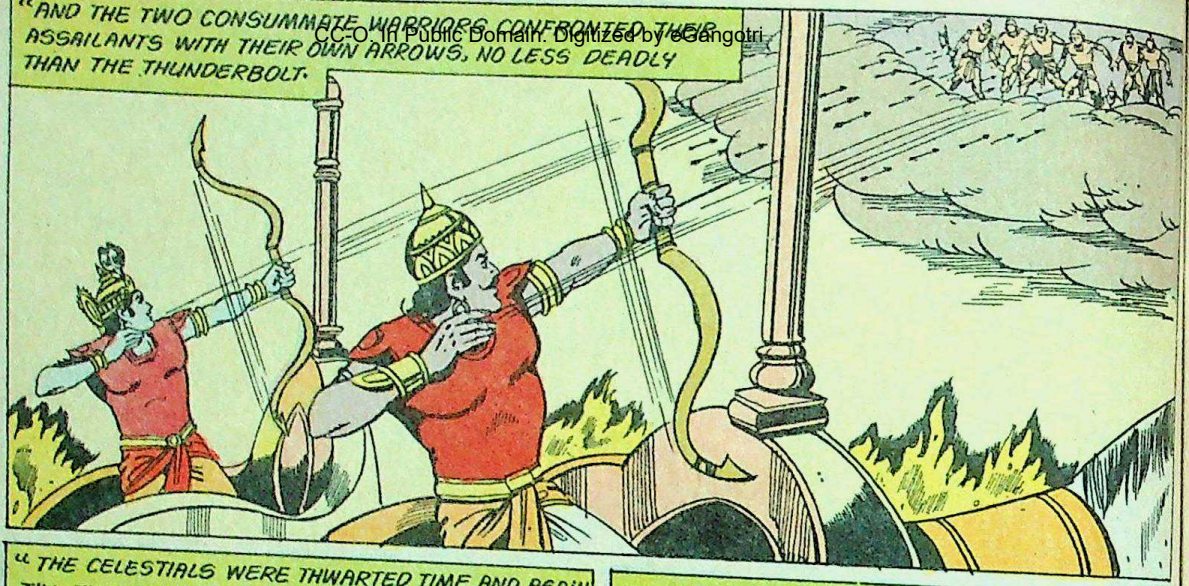

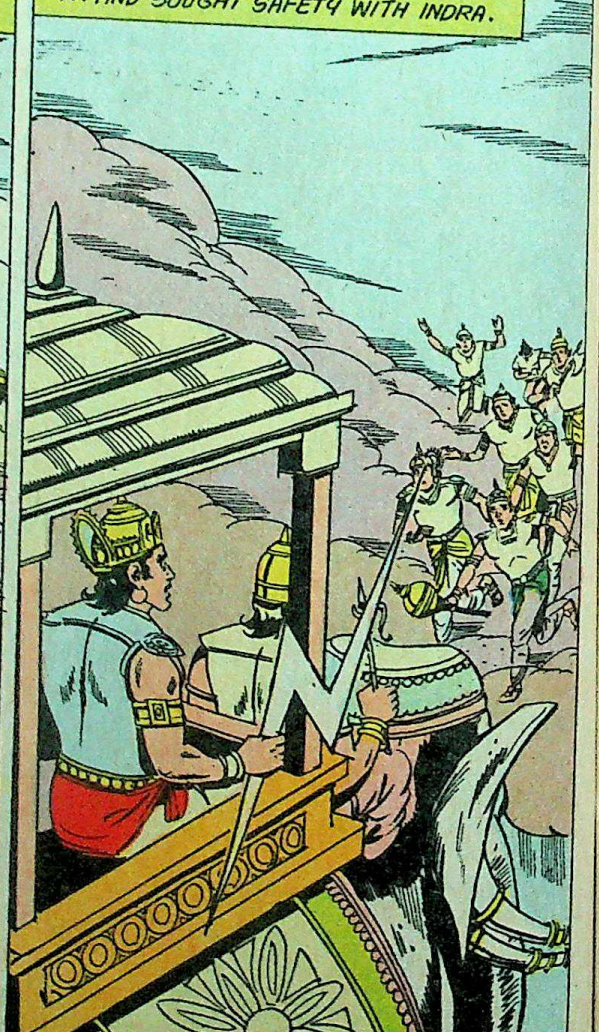

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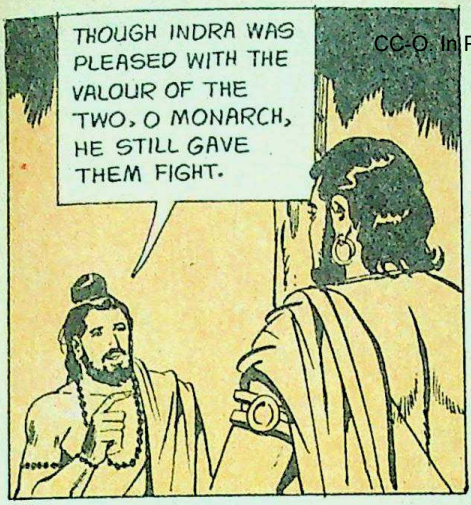

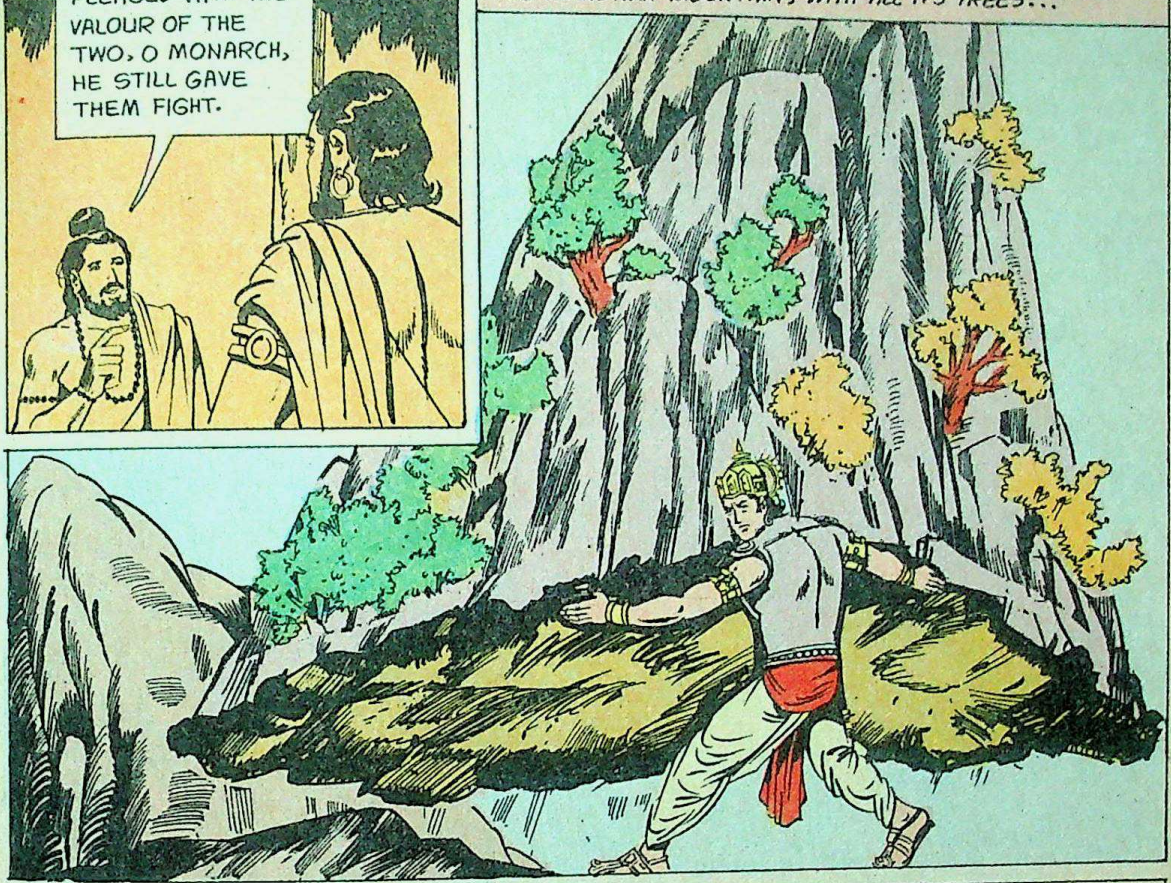

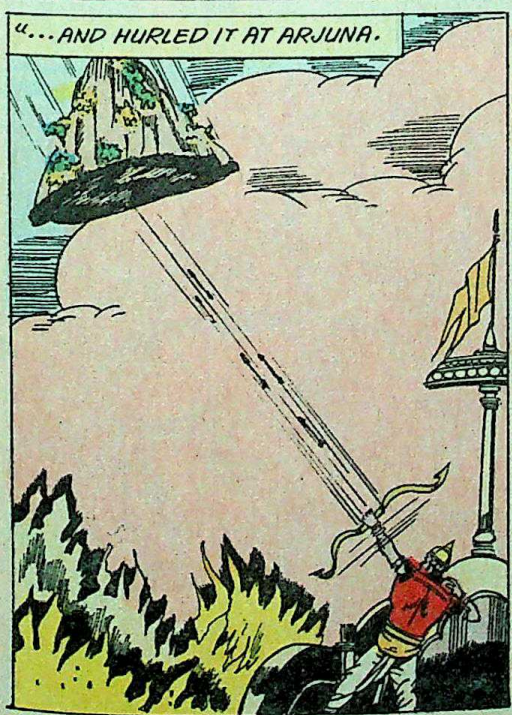

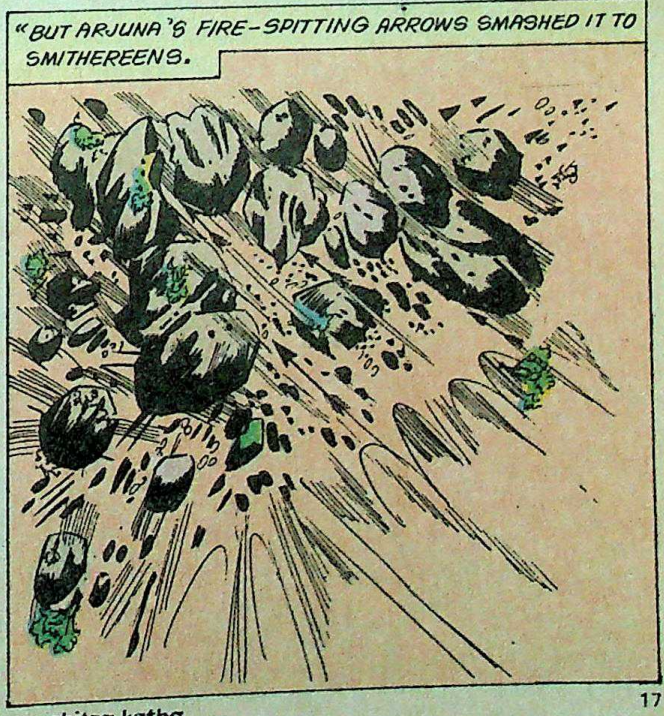

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"ARJUNA ASKED HIM FOR VARIOUS MARVELLOUS WEAPONS AND INDRA APPOINTED THE TIME FOR GIVING THEM SAYING:

IN TIMES TO COME, WHEN MAHADEVA'S GRACE FALLS ON YOU, THEN SHALL I GIVE YOU ALL MY WEAPONS.

"THEN KRISHNA, O MONARCH, ASKED THAT HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH ARJUNA BE ETERNAL. INDRA GRANTED HIM THAT BOON AND THEN, AFTER SPEAKING TO AGNI, RETURNED TO HIS HEAVENLY ABODE WITH HIS COMPANIONS.

"AND AGNI SAID TO ARJUNA AND KRISHNA:

I HAVE BEEN SERVED WELL BY BOTH OF YOU. NOW YOU MAY GO WHEREVER YOU CHOOSE TO.

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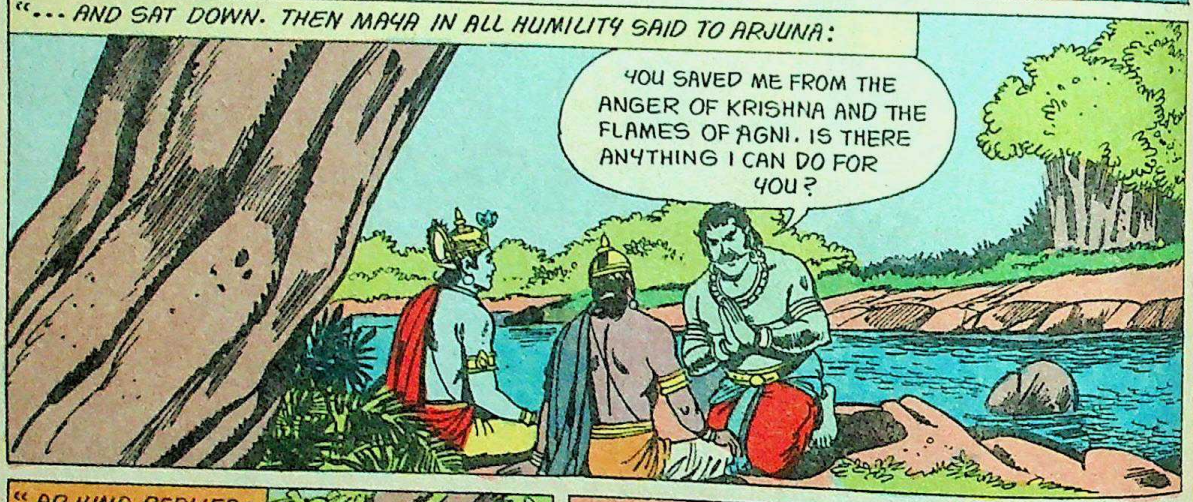

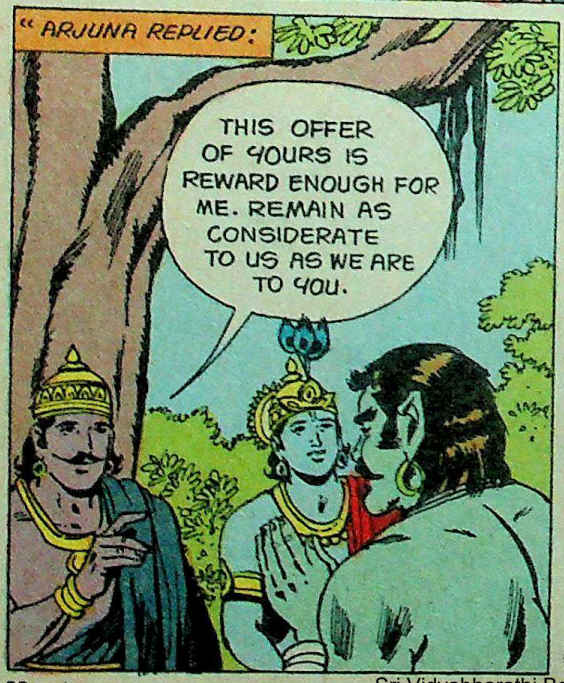

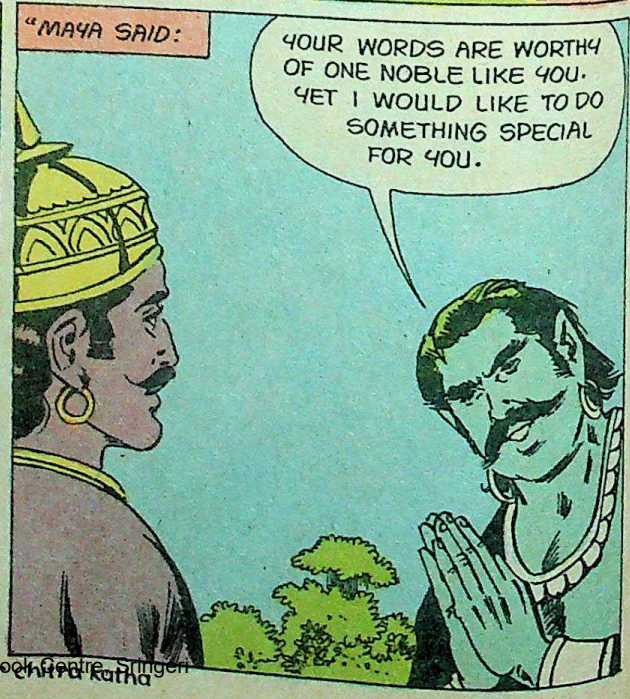

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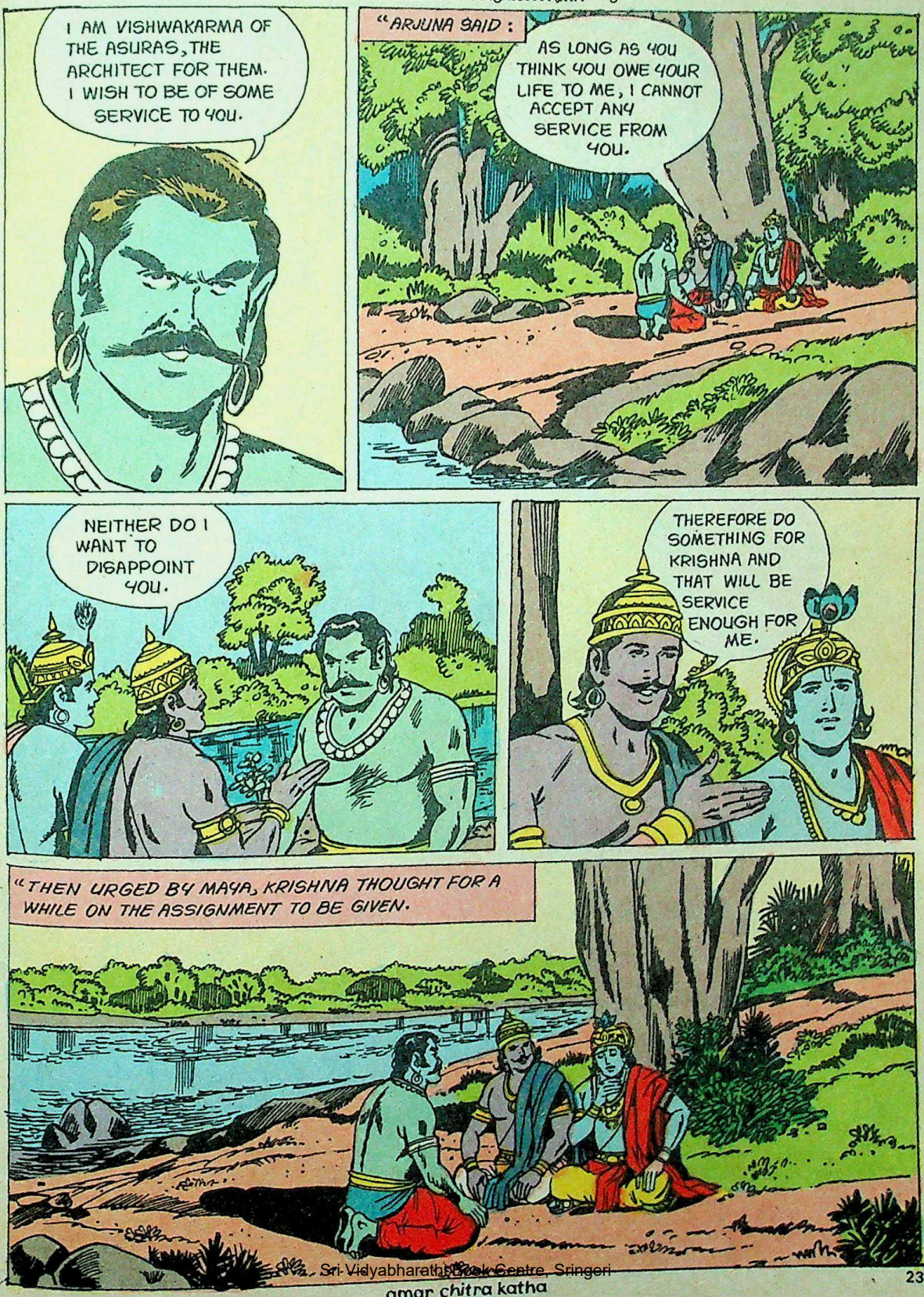

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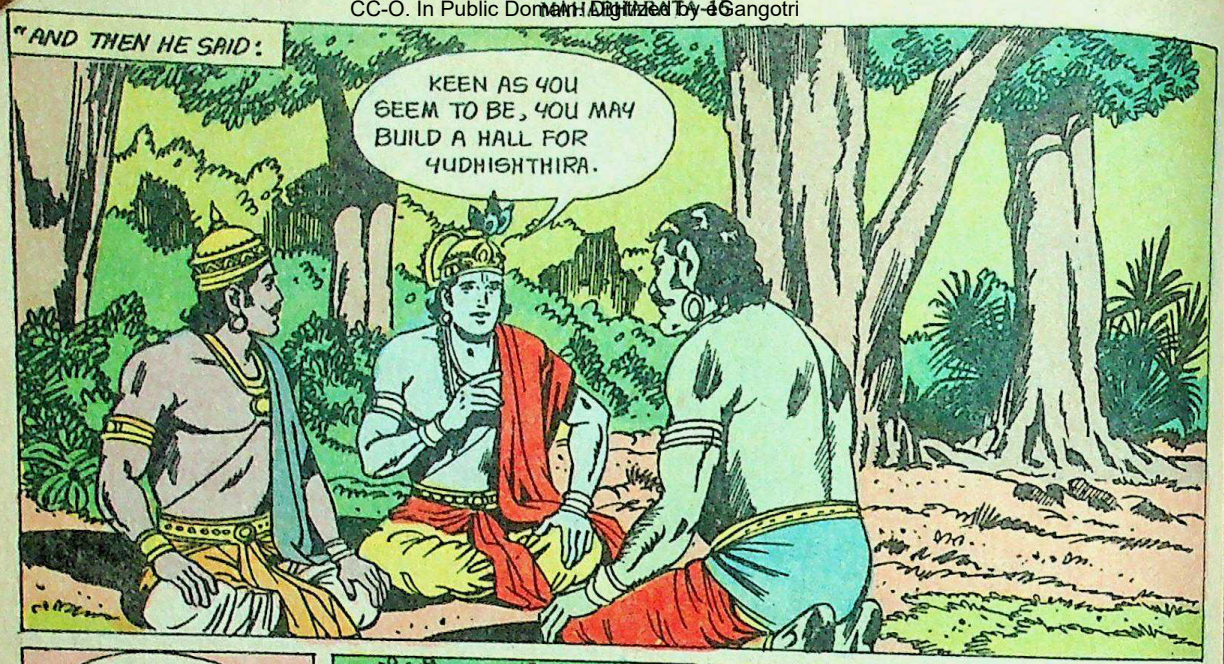

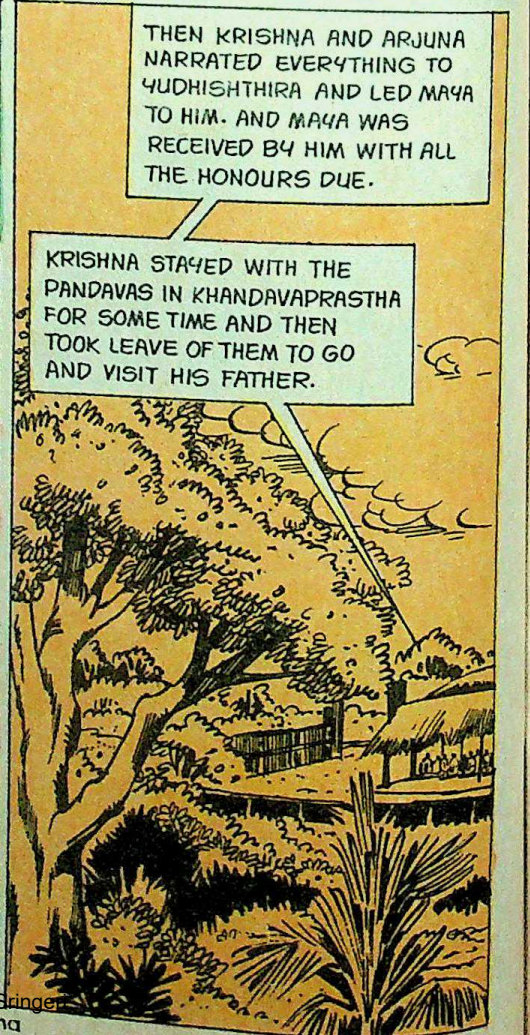

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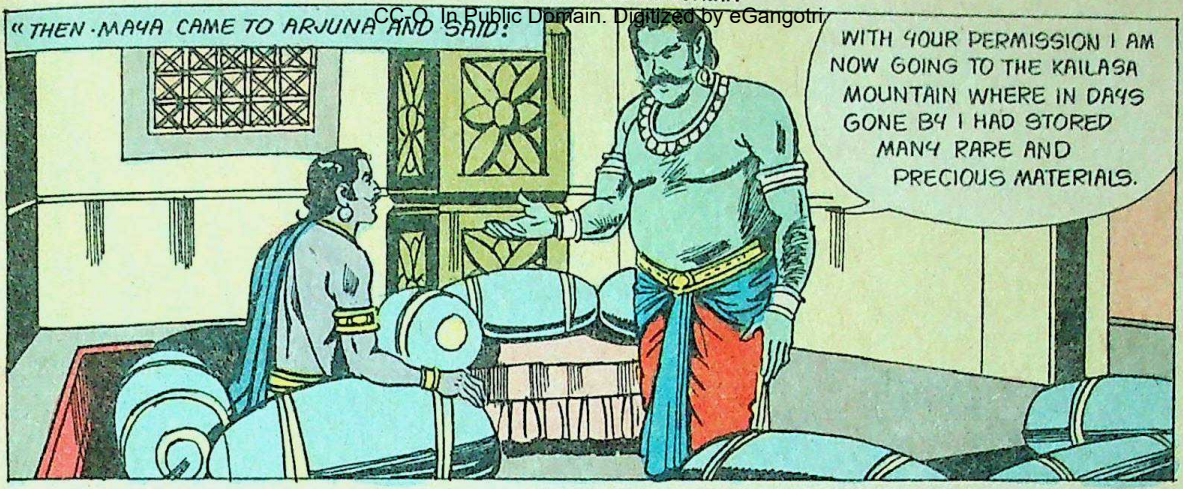

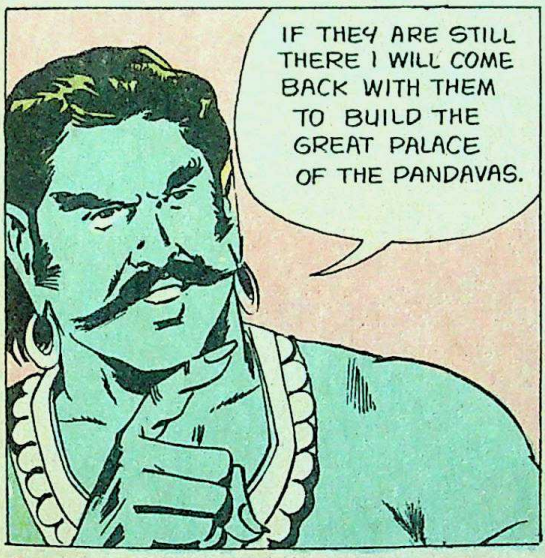

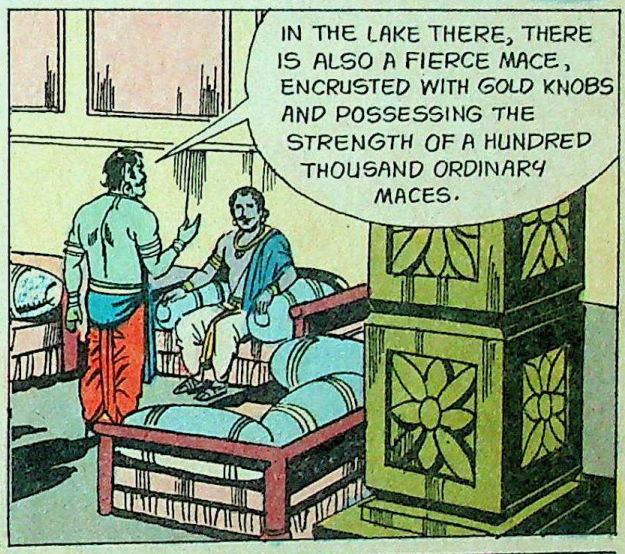

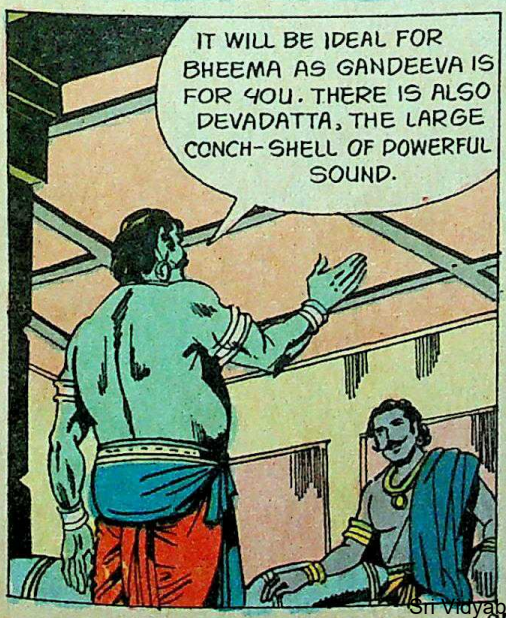

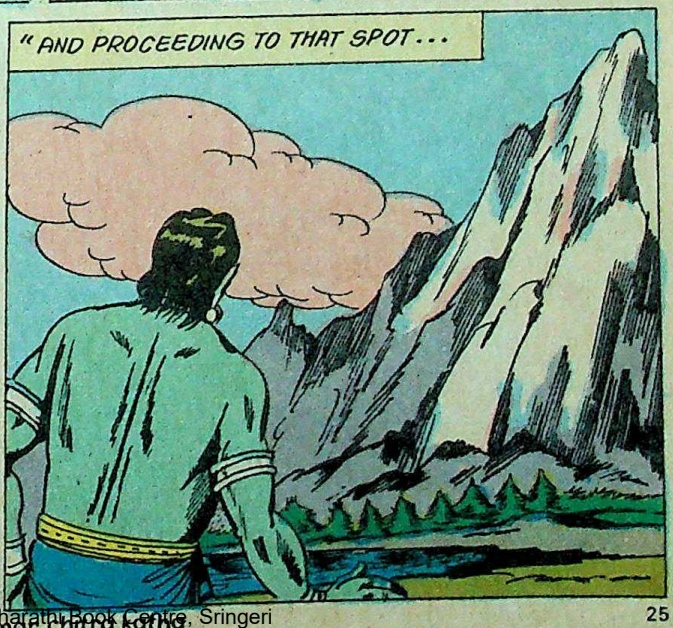

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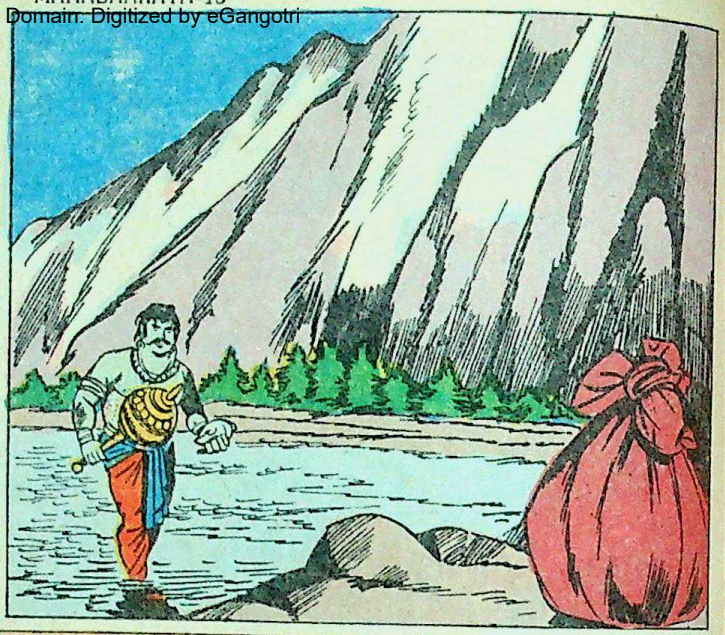

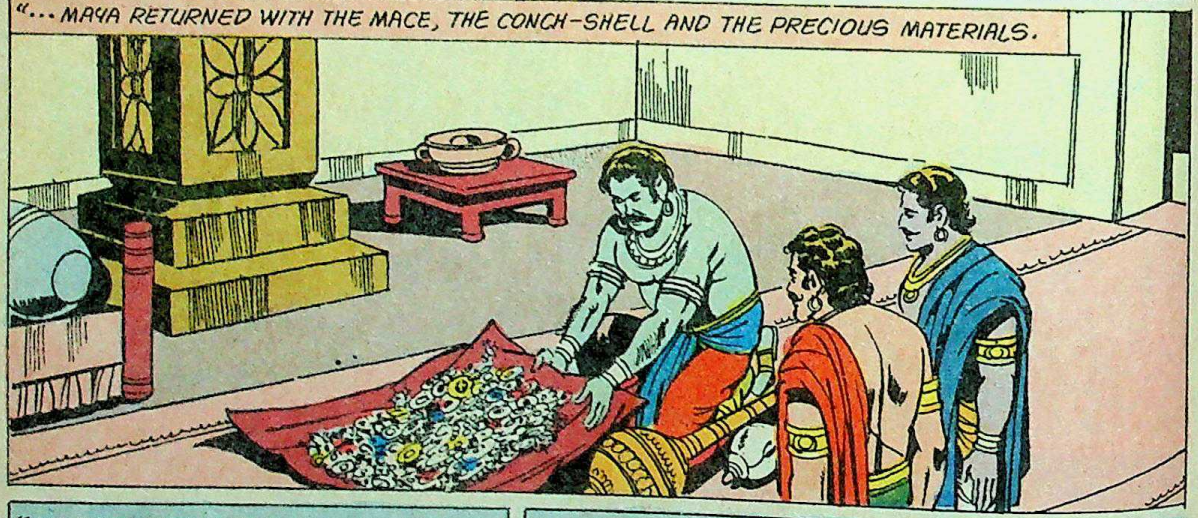

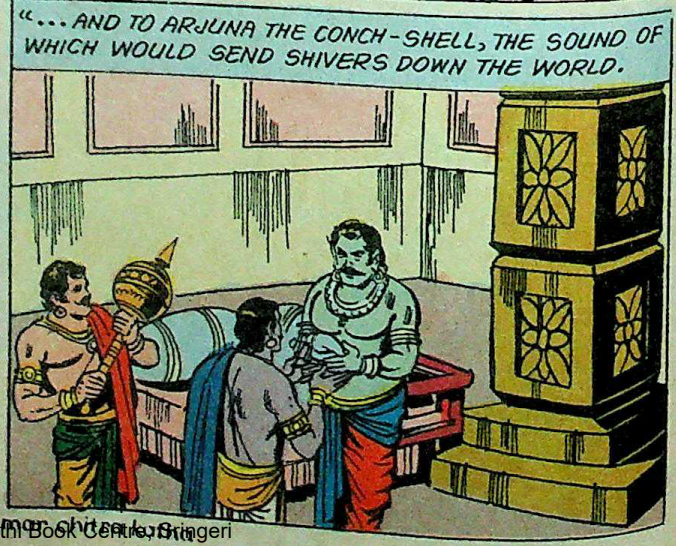

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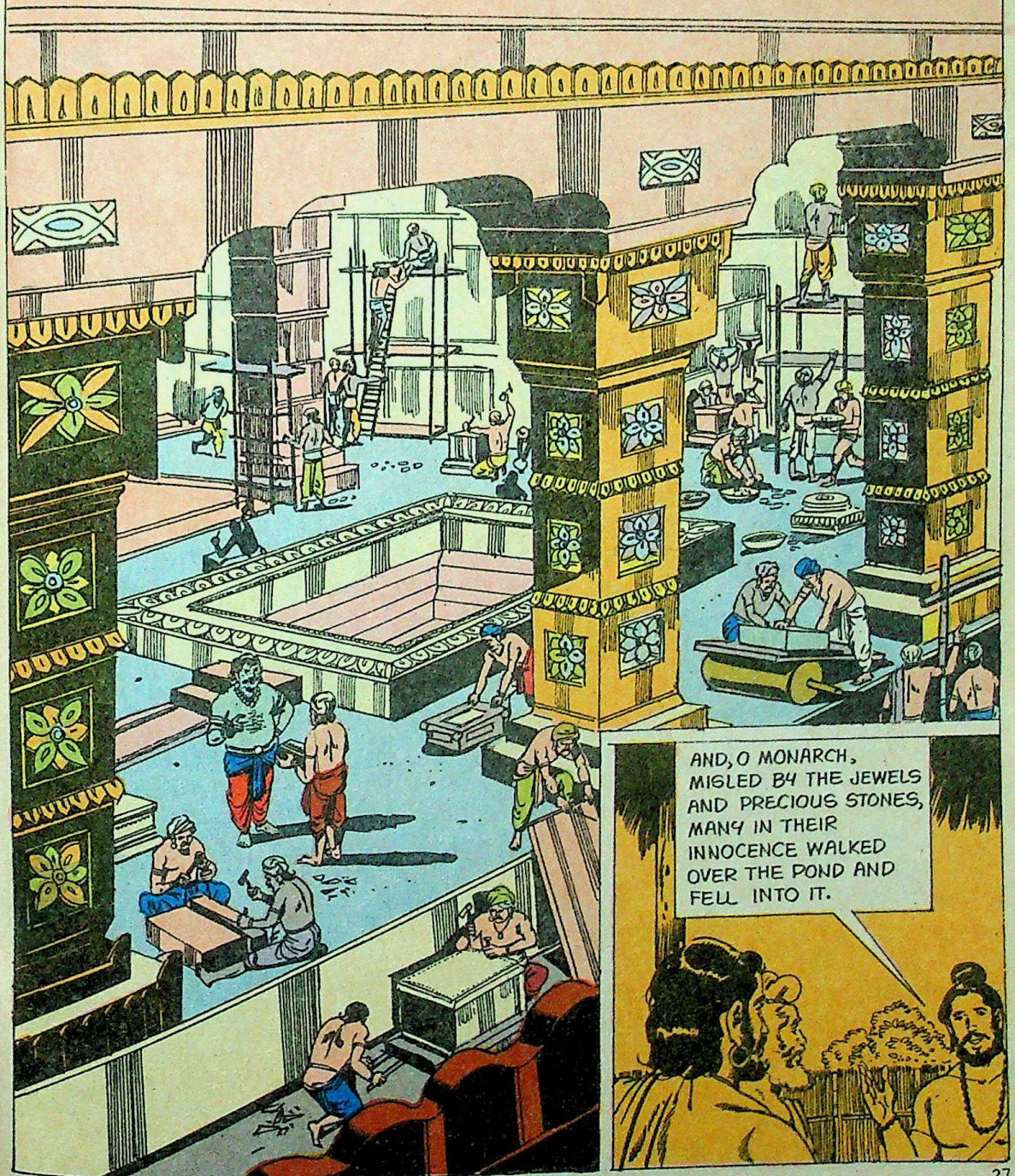
"AND THEN HE STARTED BUILDING THE INIMITABLE PALACE WITH COLUMNS OF GOLD AND WALLS ENCRUSTED WITH PRECIOUS STONES AND WHICH OCCUPIED AN AREA OF FIVE THOUSAND SQUARE CUBITS.* WITHIN THE PALACE GROUNDS MAYA DESIGNED A POND, THE BANKS OF WHICH WERE SET IN MARBLE SLABS DECORATED WITH PEARLS. A FLIGHT OF CRYSTAL STEPS LED ONE FROM THE BANKS TO THE WATER WHICH WAS TRANSPARENTLY CLEAR. HE PLACED IN THE WATER, LOTUSES MADE OF DARK HUGE GEMS WITH STALKS OF BRIGHT JEWELS; AND FISH AND WATER-BIRDS AND TORTOISES.



* ONE CUBIT IS EQUAL TO 45 TO 56 CENTIMETRES

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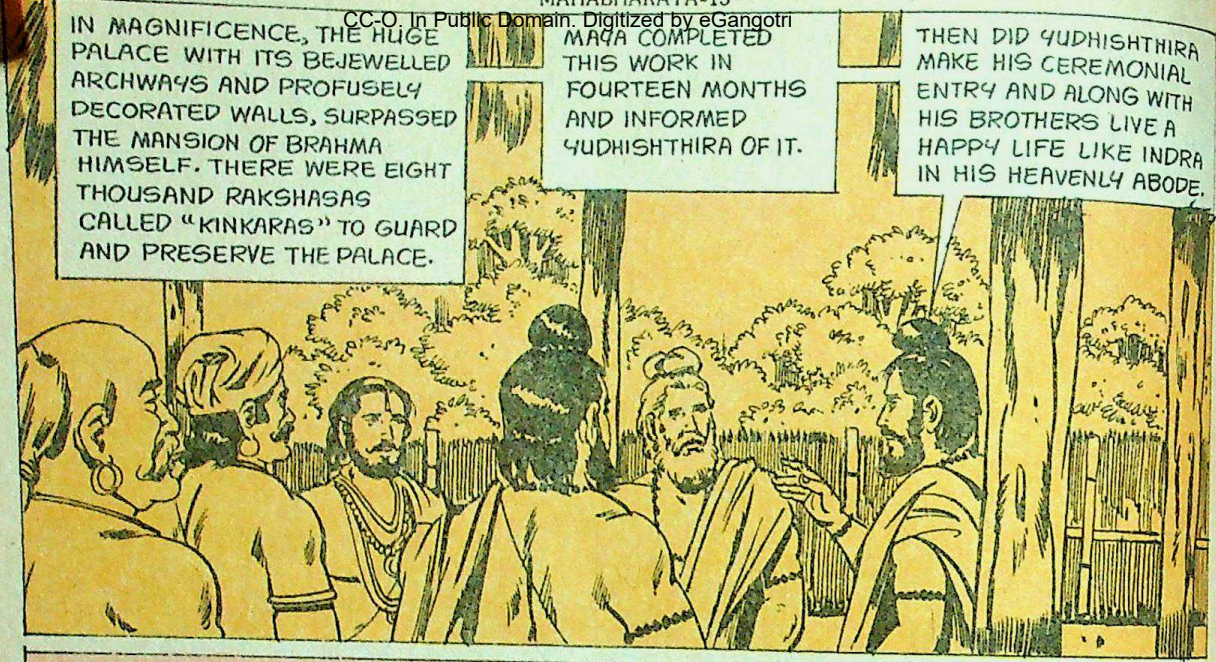

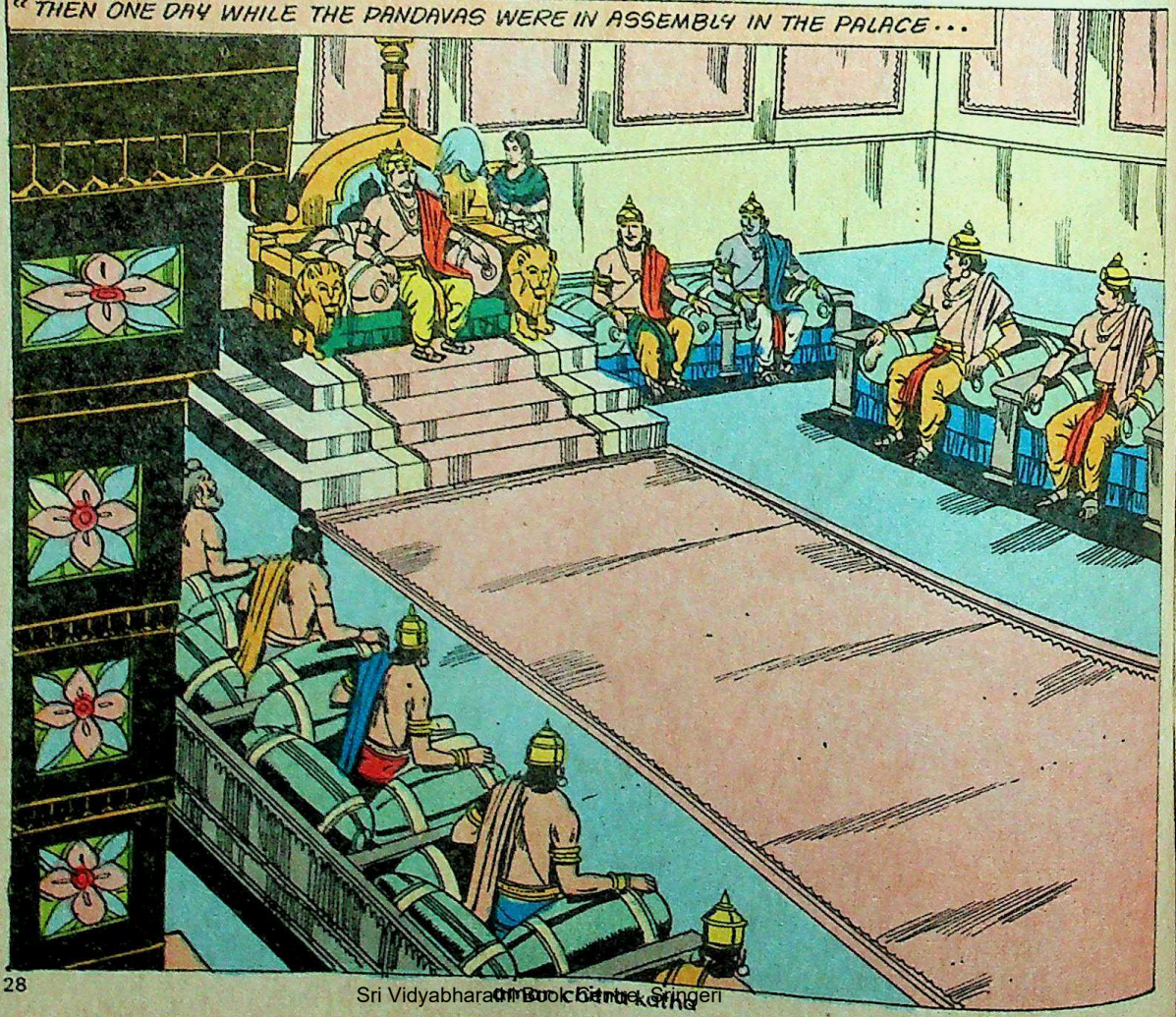

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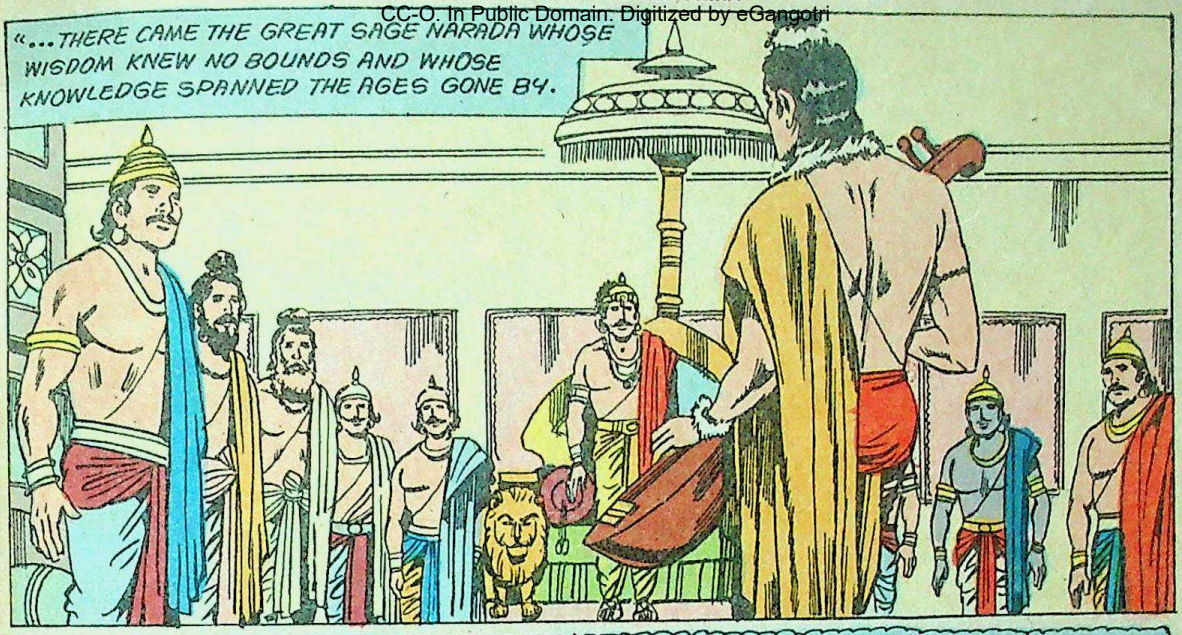

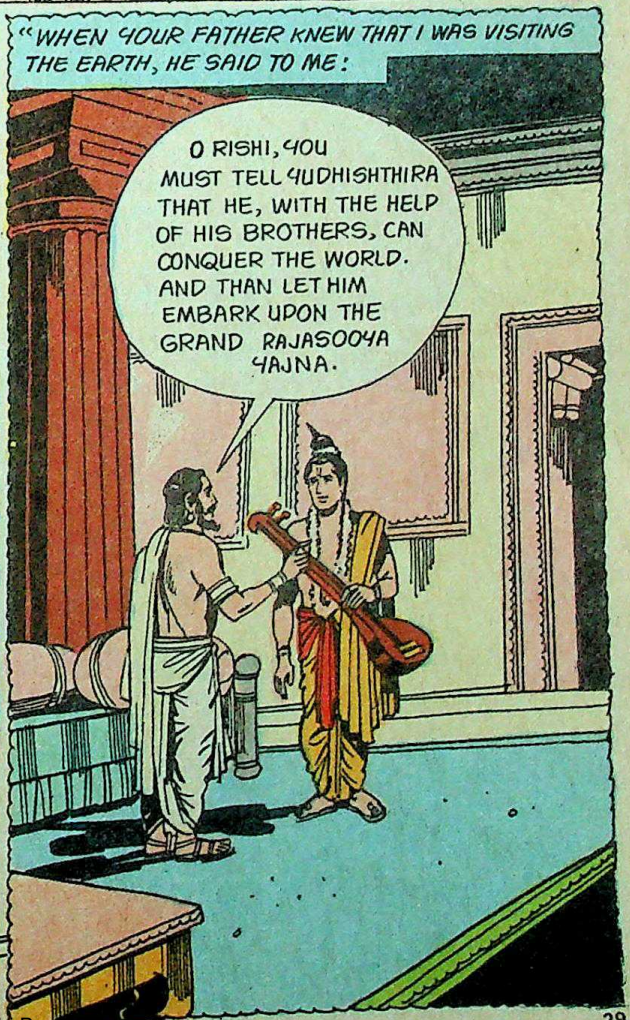

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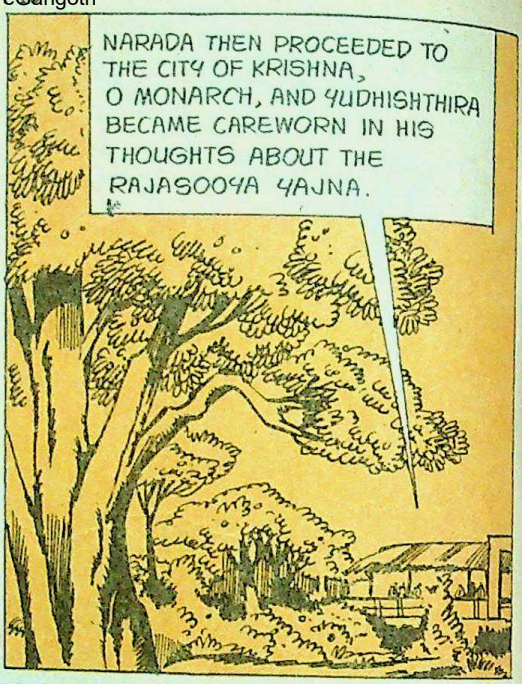

"HE SUMMONED HIS COUNSELLORS AND IN THE PRESENCE OF VEDA VYASA AND OTHER RISHIS SOUGHT THEIR VIEWS ON THE RAJASOOYA. THEY REPLIED:

YOU ARE EMINENTLY QUALIFIED TO PERFORM THE YAJNA AND WE ARE HERE AT YOUR COMMAND.

THEREFORE, O KING, LET YOUR PLANS BE MADE FORTHWITH FOR THE SACRIFICIAL UNDERTAKING.

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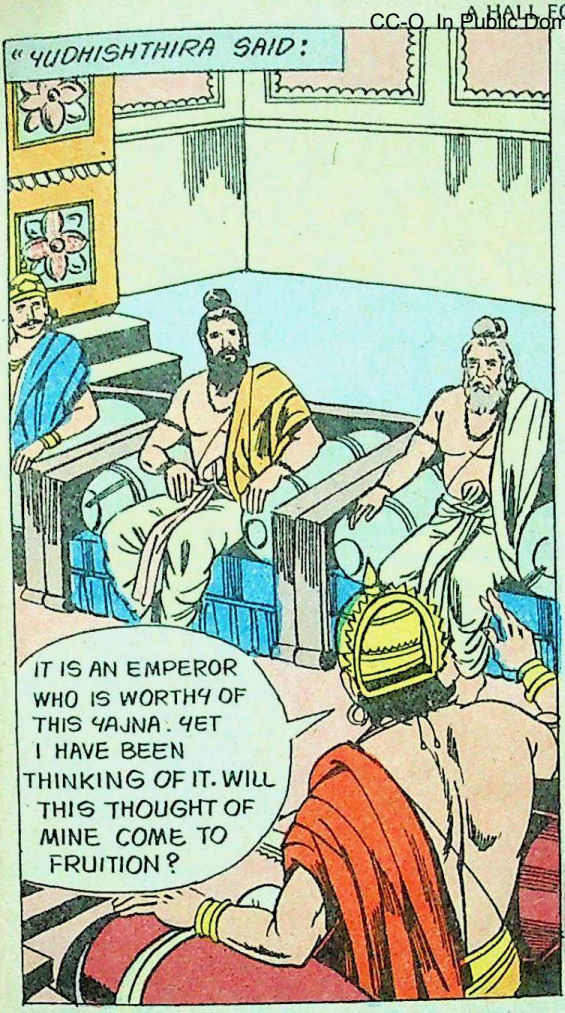

O MONARCH, THOUGH HIS BROTHERS AND COUNSELLORS CONCURRED WITH THE RISHIS...

YUDHISHTHIRA CONTEMPLATED ON HIS STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS, ON HIS RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS.

HE KNEW THAT THE WISE, WHO DID EVERYTHING AFTER DELIBERATION, WOULD HAVE NO CAUSE FOR REGRETS.

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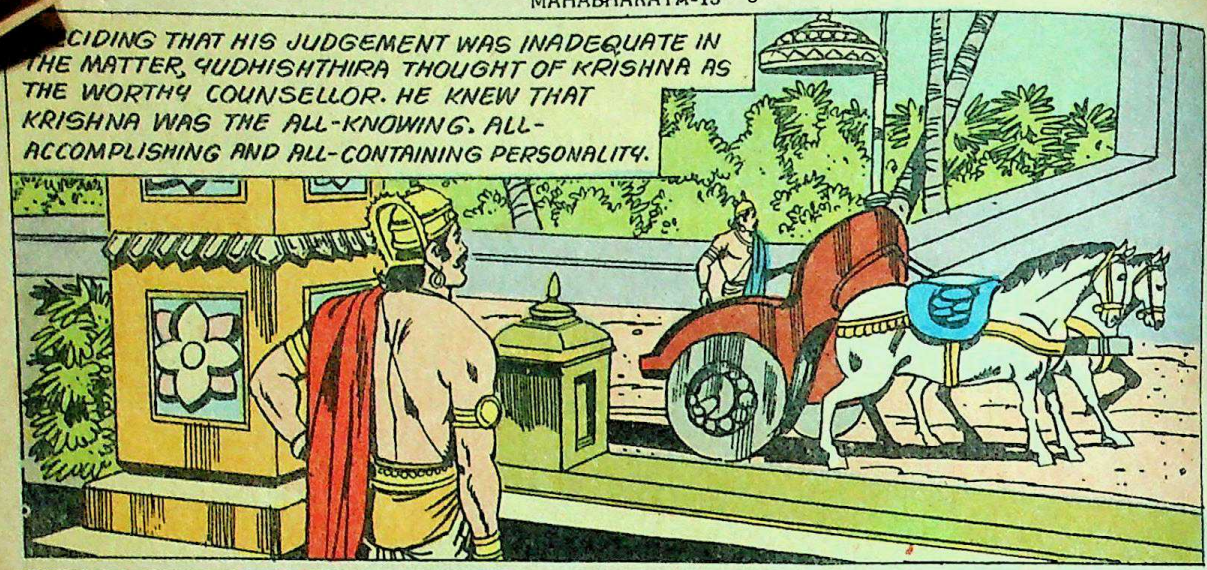

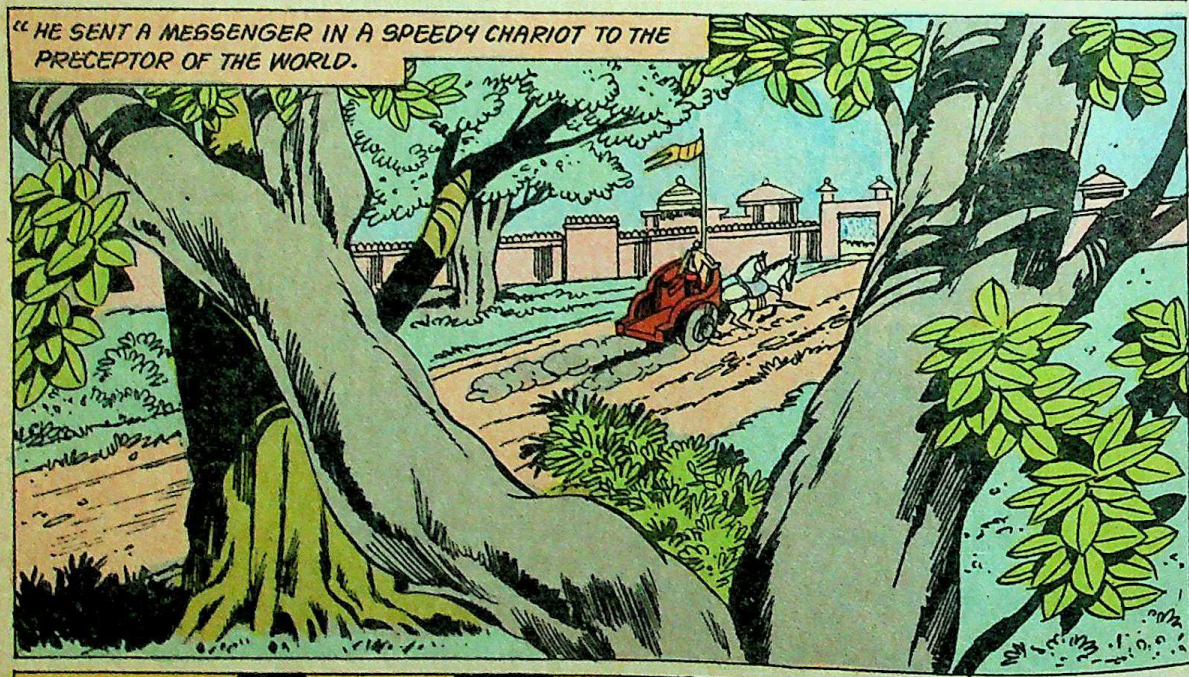

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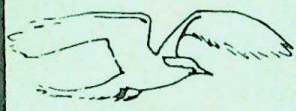
MIGRATION MAGIC

Every winter, millions of birds fly vast distances in search of food and warm climate – and return along the same route in summer. This is called migration.

1 ARCTIC TERN



The Arctic Tern nests near the North Pole. In winter, great flocks migrate 11,000 miles to the South Pole ... farther than any other bird.

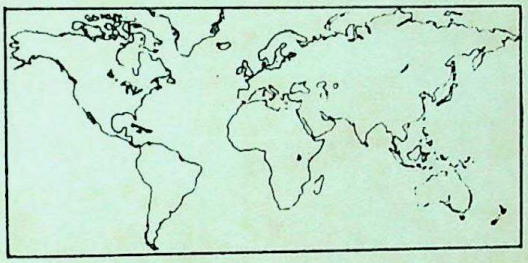
The Golden Plover flies from Alaska to Hawaii ... 2,050 miles, requiring 35 hours and 250,000 wing-beats.

Near Dehra Dun, migrating geese have been spotted at 29,500 feet – the greatest recorded height.

2 SNOW GOOSE

Birds have an amazing sense of direction. A Manx Shearwater, taken to America and released, flew straight across the Atlantic Ocean to its nest in Britain, in 12 hours.

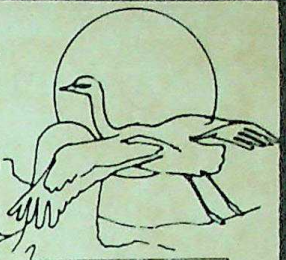
Even a newborn Shearwater, on its first migration, will fly 8,000 miles of Atlantic Ocean – with water as far as the eye can see – and land exactly on the tiny Tristan da Cunha islands.



3 HUMMINGBIRD

By observing the position of the sun, and matching that with the time of day, birds know where they are and where to go. They instinctively know what time it is, like a built-in clock.

They use the night sky as a sort of map. Familiar star groups serve as landmarks or sky marks – from which they take directions.



4 SANDHILL CRANE

Many may be sensitive to the earth's magnetic and gravity fields, like a built-in compass.

They also look out for familiar landmarks far below – and even familiar sounds, like waves crashing against a shore ... too soft and low for human ears.

All these powers make it sure that nowhere over land or sea can a bird lose its way!

5 SHEARWATER

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